









C-34

079939

*(Handwritten signature)*



# Triveni

INDIA'S LITERARY AND CULTURAL QUARTERLY

FOUNDER EDITOR : KOLAVENNU RAMAKOTISWARA RAU

FORMER EDITOR : Dr. BHAVARAJU NARASIMHA RAO  
(1971-1992)

*(Faint circular library stamp with handwritten signature and date 07/19/95)*



EDITOR

Prof. I. V. CHALAPATI RAO





TRU  
SPA  
THE  
A.K  
'HO  
NO  
TRA  
MY  
LEA  
TOV  
SEC  
THE  
CIV  
ALL  
CHA  
ON  
SHA  
AHN  
SHA  
IND  
BAR  
PAT  
EVE  
DEA  
FAS  
THE  
BOO  
THE  
WH



## CONTENTS

|   |                               |    |
|---|-------------------------------|----|
| TRIPLE STREAM( Editorial )  | <i>I.V.CHALAPATI Rao</i>      | 1  |
| SPARKLES OF SUNDARA KANDA   | <i>Dr. R.JANARDANA RAO</i>    | 4  |
| THE EXPATRIATE SENSIBILITY OF<br>A. K. RAMANUJAN                  | <i>Dr.VAYOTHI</i>             | 10 |
| 'HOME' IN IVY COMPTON BRUNETT'S<br>NOVELS : A STUDY               | <i>Dr. TASOKA RANI</i>        | 15 |
| TRADITION AND MODERNITY.  | <i>Dr.D.ANJANEYULU</i>        | 20 |
| MY PREMONITION (a poem)   | <i>MADHUSUDAN. A.VADIYAR</i>  | 24 |
| LEARNING BY UPASANA   | <i>Dr.P.SUBBARAYAN</i>        | 25 |
| TOWARDS A QUEST FOR<br>SECULAR IDENTITY : GRAHAM GREENE           | <i>Prof.K.VENKATA REDDY</i>   | 28 |
| THROUGH THE EYE OF AN ARTIST                                      | <i>KASTURI BHASKARA RAO</i>   | 31 |
| CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL (prose poem)                                | <i>R.SURYANARAYANA MURTHY</i> | 34 |
| ALL FOR ME ? ( short story )                                      | <i>Ms.B.SIVA SANKARI</i>      | 35 |
| CHALLENGE TO FATE : A PERSPECTIVE<br>ON DARUWALLA'S 'FIRE - HYMN' | <i>V.L.VN.NARENDRA KUMAR</i>  | 41 |
| SHAJI'S DEPARTURE FROM<br>AHMEDNAGAR (Poem)                       | <i>Ms.B.INDIRA KUMARI</i>     | 44 |
| SHAKESPEARE SELF- PORTRAYED                                       | <i>Mrs. Y.SATYA SREE</i>      | 45 |
| IN DEFFENCE OF R. K. NARAYAN                                      | <i>B.VYAGHRESWARUDU</i>       | 49 |
| BAHUBALI , THE COLOSSUS ( Poem )                                  | <i>M.G.NARASIMHAMURTHY</i>    | 52 |
| PATTERNS IN THE MOSAIC:<br>EVELYN WAUGH'S FICTION                 | <i>Dr.D.KESAVA RAO</i>        | 53 |
| DEAR POVERTY.   | <i>Dr.C.JACOB</i>             | 58 |
| FASTING - A LOUD THINKING   | <i>Dr.R.GANGADHARA SASTRY</i> | 59 |
| THE INDIAN POLITICAL SCENE  | <i>MAMIDIPUDI PATTABHIRAM</i> | 62 |
| BOOK REVIEWS  |                               | 66 |
| THE FOREIGNER : AN EXISTENTIAL DILEMMA                            | <i>J.VENKATESWARA RAO</i>     | 73 |
| WHO'S WHO AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS                                  |                               | 77 |



# TRIVENI

INDIA'S LITERARY AND CULTURAL QUARTERLY

VOLUME 64

JANUARY-MARCH & APRIL - JUNE 1995

NUMBERS 1&2

**Founder**

K. Ramakotiswara Rao

**Founder Editors**

K. Ramakotiswara Rao

Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao

**Editor**

Prof. I. V. Chalapati Rao

**Associate Editors**

Dr. D. Anjaneyulu

Dr. L. Adinarayana

**Sub-Editor**

Y. Satya Sree

**Advisory Board**

Prof. Gangadhar Gadgil

B. Kutumba Rao

Dr. Prema Nandakumar

V. Sivaramakrishnan

Manoj Das

B. Subbarayan

**Printer & Publisher**

B. N. Murthy

**Publishers**

The Triveni Foundation (Regd.)

655,

Chikkadpalli

Hyderabad - 500 020

Phone No : 661403

**Printed at**

Radhika graphics

Hyderabad - 500 036.



**THE TRIVENI SYMBOL**

Padma (the Lotus) represents the purity of Love;  
Jyoti (the Flame) the light of wisdom and  
Vajra (Thunderbolt of Indra)  
The splendour of power.

Triveni is devoted to Art, Literature, History and Culture. Its main function is to interpret through English the creative writing in different languages of India to the people of all states and to the world outside.

Life Subscription : Rs. 1000.

Annual Subscription : India and Sri Lanka Rs. 60 for individuals and Rs. 70/- to institutions.

U.S.A. (Air Mail) \$35. U.K. (Air Mail) £ 20.

Original articles pertaining to literature, art, history, culture, and general interest (other than political) are considered for publication in Triveni. Articles should be typed with double space, on one side only. The Editors are not necessarily in agreement with the views expressed by the contributors.

Subscriptions begin with January only. Remittances are to be made in favour of the Manager, "Triveni" by Money Order, Bank Draft or Cheque (A/c payee) on any scheduled bank in Hyderabad. For out-station cheques Rs. 10 should be added to cover bank charges.

**Subscriber Number should be quoted in all correspondence.**



## ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Mr. Justice Nittoor Srinivasa Rau (*Chief Justice of Mysore, Retired*)  
 Dr. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya (*Former President, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi*)  
 Dr. B.Gopala Reddy (*Former Governor of U.P.*)  
 Dr. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar (*Former Vice-Chancellor, Andhra University*)  
 Dr. K.Satchidananda Murthy (*Former Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission*)  
 Sri B.V.S.S.Mani (*Swadharma Swaarajya Sangha, Madras*)  
 Dr. Vidya Niwas Misra (*Chief Editor, Navabharat Times, New Delhi*)  
 Mr. Justice Avula Sambasiva Rao (*Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh, Retired*)  
 Mr. T.C.A. Ramanujam (*Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, Retired*)  
 Dr. I.Panduranga Rao (*Executive Director, Jnanpith, New Delhi*)  
 Prof. Kota Sundara Rama Sarma (*Livermore, U.S.A.*)

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Prof. I.V.Chalapathi Rao ( <i>Chairman</i> )              | Sri B.N.Murthy ( <i>Secretary &amp; Treasurer</i> ) |
| Sri Vemaraju.Narasimha Rao<br>( <i>Managing Trustee</i> ) | Sri B.Parvatala Rao ( <i>Nominated Member</i> )     |
| Dr. A.P.Ranga Rao ( <i>Member</i> )                       | Dr. Vijay R. Kolavennu ( <i>Nominated Member</i> )  |
|   | Prof. P.S.Sarma ( <i>Member</i> )                   |

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following persons recently joined the Triveni family by becoming life - subscribers.  
 The Triveni Foundation expresses its grateful thanks to them.

- |                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Dr.C.JACOB.                      | (NARASAPUR) |
| Miss.KOKA JANAKI.                | (KURNOOL)   |
| Wing.Commander.S.KRISHNA MURTHY. | (HYDERABAD) |



# THE TRIVENI FOUNDATION

(Registered Trust No.1380/1992)

Publishers of TRIVENI Cultural Quarterly

Hyderabad

## AN APPEAL

**K.Ramakotiswara Rau**, of hallowed memory, a great patriot and literateur, founded "Triveni", the cultural and literary quarterly in English, on Dec. 25, 1927, at Madras. "Triveni" has been the organ of cultural renaissance in India for nearly seventy years. Devoted to Literature, History and Art, and to the propagation of idealism in every sphere of public life, the journal has fairly realised its aspirations of drawing together the varied and dispersed lovers of art and culture in the different parts of Bharat and is interpreting the Indian Renaissance in its manifold aspects to the world outside.

Illustrious contributors to the journal include great persons like Sri Aurobindo, Dr. S.Radhakrishnan, C.Rajagopalachari, Rt. Hon. V.S.Srinivasa Sastri, Jawaharlal Nehru, J.Krishnamurti, Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, K.M.Munshi, M. Chalapathi Rau, N.Raghunathan, Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya, Prof. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Dr. V.K. Gokak and many other eminent scholars and renowned writers.

Journals like "Triveni" devoted to literature and culture, naturally cater to a limited number of intellectuals and are not to be considered as successful business propositions in any country. They need the active support of the cultured few. Therefore, with a view to having a permanent basis for publishing "Triveni" uninterruptedly a public charitable trust has been formed. We are enlisting **Patrons** (who donate Rs. 5000 and more - they get 3 copies free of every number), **Donors** (Rs. 2000 to 4000 - 2 free copies) and **Life Subscribers** (Rs. 1000 - one Free copy). Donations from the patrons, Donors and Life Subscribers will be gratefully acknowledged in the columns of "Triveni".

Donors are requested to draw Demand Draft/Cheques in favour of Triveni Foundation (A/c payable at any bank in Hyderabad. **Donations are exempt from Income Tax, under Section 80 G.**

We earnestly solicit the patronage of philanthropic persons to enlist themselves as Patrons or Donors or Life Subscribers and extend their co-operation to the cause of Indian literature and culture.

**THE TRIVENI FOUNDATION**



# C O N T E N T S

|   |                              |    |
|---|------------------------------|----|
| TRIPLE STREAM (Editorial)   | - I.V. Chalapathi Rao        | 2  |
| POPULATION & SOCIAL<br>DEVELOPMENT - New Directions                                 | - Avabai B Wadia             | 5  |
| RUDOLF FISHER'S<br>"The Conjure-Man Dies"   | - G. Girija Bai              | 10 |
| IT'S MAN'S THAT'S LIFE (A Poem)   | - Dr. C. Narayana Reddy      | 18 |
| WAR AND NO PEACE : A Study on<br>Arun Joshi's "The Home Coming"                     | - Dr. Ch. A. Rajendra Prasad | 19 |
| THE HOUSE (A Poem)  | - Dr. B. Parvati             | 22 |
| THE THEME OF MARITAL DISHARMONY<br>IN "The Serpent and The Rope"<br>and "The Guide" | - Dr. K. Meera Bai           | 23 |
| THE ROMANCE OF ADVERTISEMENTS   | - Vemaraju Narasimha Rao     | 29 |
| REAL STRENGTH (A Poem)  | - Dr. C. Jacob               | 32 |
| A VISUAL MELODY   | - Dr. S. Sanjeev Dev         | 32 |
| THE PARADOX OF THE FULLY<br>AWAKENED CONDITION                                      | - Andrew Cohen               | 33 |
| THE VEDANTA OF YOGI VEMANA  | - A. Satyavathi              | 35 |
| SPIRITUALISM Vs MATERIALISM IN<br>BHABANI BHATTACHARYA'S<br>"A Dream in Hawai"      | - K. Yadagiri                | 36 |
| PEEP INTO THE OCEAN'S DEPTHS  | - M. Sridhar and Alladi Uma  | 41 |
| ALL ABOUT TYRANNY : A STUDY OF<br>IVY COMPTON-BURNETT'S NOVELS                      | - Dr. T. Asoka Rani          | 42 |
| HERMANN HESSE'S SIDDHARTHA AND<br>THE ANCIENT INDIAN WAY OF LIFE                    | - Ramesh K. Sree             | 46 |
| I DO NOT WRITE (A Poem)   | - Dr. R. K. Singh            | 52 |
| THE BURNT LYRIC (A short story)   | - Peddibhotla Subbramaiah    | 53 |
| PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA'S<br>"Whispers from Eternity"                                 | - K. V. Rama Rao             | 59 |
| THE WAYWARD WOMAN IN THE SOCIAL<br>COMEDIES OF OSCAR WILDE                          | - Dr. M. Venkateswara Rao    | 62 |
| THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN MADE KNOWN  | - K. Suresh Kumar            | 66 |
| THE POLITICAL SCENE   | - Mamidipudi Pattabhiram     | 69 |
| BOOKS AND AUTHORS   | - Dr. D. Anjaneyulu          | 73 |
| BOOK REVIEWS  |                              | 77 |
| WHO'S WHO AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS  |                              | 82 |



# TRIVENI

INDIA'S LITERARY AND CULTURAL QUARTERLY

VOLUME 64

JULY-SEPTEMBER 1995

NUMBER 3

## Founder

K. Ramakotiswara Rau

## Founder Editors

K. Ramakotiswara Rau

Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao

## Editor

Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao

## Associate Editors

Dr. D. Anjaneyulu

Dr. L. Adinarayana

## Sub-Editor

Y. Satya Sree

## Advisory Board

Prof. Gangadhar Gadgil

B. Kutumba Rao

Dr. Prema Nandakumar

V. Sivaramakrishnan

Manoj Das

B. Subbarayan

## Printer

B.N. Murthy

## Printed at

Pallavi Art Printers

Padmaraonagar

Secunderabad - 500 025.

## Publishers

The Triveni Foundation (Regd.)

655, Chikkadpalli

Hyderabad - 500 020

Phone No : 661403



## THE TRIVENI SYMBOL

Padma (the Lotus) represents the purity of Love,  
Jyoti (the Flame) the light of wisdom and  
Vajra (Thunderbolt of Indra)  
The splendour of power.

Triveni is devoted to Art, Literature, History and Culture. Its main function is to interpret through English the creative writing in different languages of India to the people all states and to the world outside.

Life Subscription : Rs. 1000

Annual Subscription : India and Sri Lanka Rs. 60 for individuals  
and Rs. 70/- to institutions.

U.S.A. (Air Mail) \$35. U.K. (Air Mail)

£ 20.

Original articles pertaining to literature, art, history, culture, and general interest (other than political) are considered for publication in Triveni. Articles should be typed with double space, on one side only. The Editors are not necessarily in agreement with the views expressed by the contributors.

Subscriptions begin with January only. Remittances are to be made in favour of the Manager, "TRIVENI" by Money Order, Bank Draft or Cheque (A/c payee) on any scheduled bank in Hyderabad. For out-station cheques Rs. 10 should be added to cover bank charges.

Subscriber Number should be quoted in all correspondence



# C O N T E N T S

|     |   |  |    |
|-----|---|--|----|
| 1.  | TRIPLE STREAM (Editorial)                           | - I.V. Chalapati Rao                           | 5  |
| 2.  | A NOTE ON PADMAVATY'S POETRY                        | - Harindranath Chattopadhyaya                  | 9  |
| 3.  | SEAMUS HEANEY<br>NOBLE LAUREATE, 1995               | - Y. Satya Sree                                | 13 |
| 4.  | WHEN HUMANISM FLOWERED                              | - Govindaraju Sita Devi                        | 16 |
| 5.  | OUR INDIA   | - Dr. C. Jacob                                 | 20 |
| 6.  | APTAVAKYAM AS A STRATEGY<br>OF LEARNING             | - D. P. Subbarayan                             | 21 |
| 7.  | ON RETIREMENT                                       | - G. Somaseshu                                 | 27 |
| 8.  | THINGS FALL APART IN<br>ALIENATED HISTORY           | - Dr. K. Damodar Rao and<br>K. Indrasena Reddy | 28 |
| 9.  | DEATH! I GREET THEE                                 | - R. Suryanarayana Murty                       | 34 |
| 10. | PARTITION   | - Subra Bharati Manian                         | 35 |
| 11. | TRANSLATIONS FROM SRIMATH<br>ANDHRA MAHA BHAGAVATAM | - B. Indira Kumari                             | 40 |
| 12. | SRI RAMANUJA AND DIVYA<br>PRABANDHAM                | - Dr. M. Varadarajan                           | 41 |
| 13. | HEAVENLY VISITORS                                   | - Dr. R. Janadhana Rao                         | 44 |
| 14. | GRAND MOTHER  | - Dr. B. Parvati                               | 45 |
| 15. | MENTOMORI   | - A. R. Narayanan                              | 46 |
| 16. | PRAYER  | - Prof. S. Jagadisan.                          | 47 |
| 17. | OM VIKRAM SETH'S<br>'THE GOLDEN GATE'               | - Dr. T. Vasudeva Reddy                        | 51 |
| 18. | TO SLEEP  | - M. B. Thakur                                 | 52 |
| 19. | AMITA DESAI'S "WHERE SHALL<br>WE GO THIS SUMMER "   | - M. A. Waheed                                 | 53 |
| 20. | THE BARD OF SIVABHARATHAM                           | - J. Hanumath Sastry                           | 58 |
| 21. | THE POLITICAL SCENE                                 | - Mamidipudi Pattabhiram                       | 61 |
| 22. | R. D. LAING: EXISTENTIAL<br>PHENOMENOLOGY           | - Dr. S. Ranganadha                            | 65 |
| 23. | BOOK REVIEWS  |  | 74 |
| 24. | OUR CONTRIBUTORS                                    |  | 76 |



# TRIVENI

INDIA'S LITERARY AND CULTURAL QUARTERLY

VOLUME 64

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1995

NUMBER 4

**Founder Editor**

K. Ramakotishwara Rau

**Former Editor**

Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao

**Editor**

Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao

**Associate Editors**

Dr. D. Anjaneyulu

Dr. L. Adinarayana

**Sub-Editor**

Y. Satya Sree

**Advisory Board**

Prof. Gangadhar Gadgil

B. Kutumba Rao

Dr. Premā Nandakumar

V. Sivaramakrishnan

Manoj Das

B. Subbarayan

**Printer**

B.N. Murthy

**Printed at**

Pallavi Art Printers

Padmaranagar

Secunderabad - 500 025.

**Publishers**

The Triveni Foundation (Regd.)

655, Chikkadpalli

Hyderabad - 500 020

Phone No : 661403



**THE TRIVENI SYMBOL**

Padma (the Lotus) represents the purity of Love, Jyoti (the Flame) the light of Wisdom and Vajra (Thunderbolt of Indra) The splendour of Power.

Triveni is devoted to Art, Literature, History and Culture. Its main function is to interpret through English the creative writing in different languages of India to the people all States and to the world outside.

Life Subscription : Rs. 1000

Annual Subscription : India and Nepal Rs. 60 for individuals and Rs. 70/- for institutions.

U.S.A. (Air Mail) \$35. U.K. (Air Mail)

£ 20.

Original articles pertaining to literature, art, history, culture, and general interest (other than political) are considered for publication in Triveni. Articles should be typed in double space, on one side only. The Editors are not necessarily in agreement with the views expressed by the contributors.

Subscriptions begin with January only. Remittances are to be made in favour of the Manager, "TRIVENI" by Money Order, Bank Draft or Cheque (A/c payee) on any scheduled bank in Hyderabad. For out-station cheques Rs. 15/- should be added to cover bank charges.

Subscriber Number should be quoted in all correspondence



## TRIPLE STREAM

Mahatma Gandhi, like Gautam Buddha is not the monopoly of India. We have no proprietary rights over him. There is special significance for his 125th birthday which is being celebrated in a befitting manner all over the world during 1994-95. He used to tell his friends with a sparkle in his eyes, that he would live for 125 years. Such was his zest for life. When his trusted secretary Mahadev Desai once sent a telegram on his birthday wishing him the life span of a centenarian, Gandhi's reply was: "By a stroke of your pen you have removed 25 years from my life!" He would have lived that long had not the assassin's bullet abruptly terminated his breath. Don't we find Morarji Desai, a true Gandhian receiving birth-day greetings remaining still at the wicket after making a century? It is good that Prime Minister Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao personally conveyed his greetings to the elder statesman who voluntarily retired from politics - a rare phenomenon in India.

Gandhi belongs to the whole world. It is absurd to pin him down to a pincode address of the post office. He is as old as the hills and yet as fresh as the morning mist. His message has a universal and all-time appeal. It transcends the frontiers of his country and the limits of time. "My mission", he said, "is not merely the

brotherhood of the Indian humanity; my mission is not merely freedom of India. I hope to realise and carry on the mission of the brotherhood of man." His hope that India would be in the vanguard of all the nations in Asia and Africa was amply fulfilled.

When a press person asked him: "Gandhi, where is your family?" he replied "The whole of India is my family". All religions belonged to him. He once declared "I am a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, a Sikh and a Jew" Such words sound hollow in the mouths of petty politicians. But his words had the weight of substance and were reinforced by his example. To him life was a scripture. His own life was his message.

In the course of his two-decades-long struggle in South Africa he fabricated Satyagraha, a new weapon of waging relentless war against political oppression without violence. He fashioned his non-nuclear weapon slightly altering Buddha's 'ahimsa' and successfully applied it to politics. Neither the racist regime in South Africa nor the mighty British Imperialism could break or bend him. He was an experimenter in Truth and a pioneer of innovative strategies for the three major evils of our time - racism, colonialism and physical violence. He lived long enough to



successfully combat the first two evils but violence claimed his life on January 30, 1948.

Gandhi's time has come today when many people think that his time had passed. Never before his message of simple living and clear thinking had been more relevant than it is now in these degenerate times when money and power are reigning supreme. A new brood of aristocracy fattening on power and political patronage came to the fore as if from nowhere. Criminalisation of politics, debasement of values and a restratification of property made rapid strides culminating in a culture of the vulture - Five Star Hotel Culture. As there is a ground swell of black money with nexus with the higher-ups, inflation runs its frenzied course. Golden gates opened up for middle men, contractors, bootleggers, wheeler-dealers and scamsters. No lock can hold against the power of the gold.

According to Gandhi we must guard our lives against Seven Sins:

1. Politics without principle.
2. Wealth without work.
3. Pleasure without conscience.
4. Knowledge without character.
5. Commerce without morality.
6. Science without humanity.
7. Worship without sacrifice.

Let us contrast these aberrations and abominations with Gandhi's ideas of truth, honesty, service, sacrifice and the trusteeship concept. When a newspaperman asked him, what would he do with the Viceroy's Palace (the present Rashtrapati Bhavan with its 340 spacious rooms over 350 sprawling acres) when Independence came, he replied that only patients in a hospital were fit to occupy it. He himself set an example to others. Even when he went to attend the Round Table Conference in London, he wore a loin cloth and another piece of cloth around his shoulders. In the same dress he went to the Buckingham Palace in response to the King's invitation. When a street urchin asked him where his trousers were, he had a hearty laugh. He never travelled by aeroplane. Even in the train he preferred to travel by 3rd Class to feel the pulse of the common man. He slept on a simple cot, and sometimes on a mat.

Once when Governor General Lord Mountbatten went to see him, he found him absorbed in conversation with poor farmers. When Lord Mountbatten told him that the purpose of his visit was to discuss State matters, he replied that he could discuss them in the presence of the visiting farmers "because it was their state". Instances like this were galore. He countered the claims of civilisation with its basis in materialism, unchecked industrialism and mechanisation.

In 1945 he wrote in a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru (who was described by John Gunther in 'Inside Asia' as a piece of the West operating in the East): "I believe that if India is to attain true



## TRIPLE STREAM

3

freedom, and through India the world as well, then sooner or later we will have to live in villages, not in palaces. A few billion people can never live happily and peaceably in cities and palaces, not by killing one another, that is by violence. " He condemned urbanisation with its environmental pollution.

Cleanliness was a matter of religion with him. When someone asked him what would he do if he became a Dictator, he replied " I don't like to be a Dictator. In case it happens, the first thing that I will do is to clean the streets of harijans in Delhi!" He did sweeping and washing wherever he lived. Ofcourse, we don't expect our rulers/leaders to do all these things. But there should be a limit to extravagance, power-mongering and flagrant violation of the Gandhian values.

We salute the standard - bearers of Gandhian values. The most prominent among them were Acharya Vinoba Bhave (whose birth centenary is being celebrated in 1995) and Lal Bahadur Shastri (whose birthday coincides with Gandhi's birthday). Speaking about Gandhi, Pearl Buck, the famous American writer commented: " India! Dare to be worthy of your Gandhi." If we look at things happening around us, Pearl Buck's words seem to be more an admonition than caution.

**I.V.CHALAPATI RAO**

**Editor** ☐

## SUBSCRIBERS! PLEASE NOTE!

Annual subscribers are requested to renew their subscription for 1995 commencing from January. They are requested to send Rs.60/- (in the case of individuals) and Rs.70/- (in case of institutions). Payment can be made by crossed cheque or bank draft or money order. Cheques may be drawn in favour of 'TRIVENI FOUNDATION, HYDERABAD'.

Out station subscribers who send bank cheques will have to send Rs.10/- extra towards commission charges.

**B.N.Murthy**  
(Secretary)



## SPARKLES OF SUNDARA KANDA.

DR. R. JANARDANA RAO

Sundarakanda, a significant part of epic, Ramayana, is studied by most, as a ritualistic daily practice known as 'Parayana'. While this serves a purpose, a new dimension will be revealed if the study is made with a discerning attitude to fathom the rich cultural heritage of this ancient land. The sacred aspect of this book should not be allowed to outshine an intense exercise of delving deep into the historical and cultural values of the hoary age. Let us consider a few instances bringing out the cultural eminence of the time of Ramayana.

The recent international conference on Ramayana held at Bangkok, attended by delegates from all over the world, speaks volumes of the cultural values of Ramayana, as cherished by the Indologists all over the world.

Dress and Ornaments: Dress worn by women at that time seems to be consisting of two fabrics, the separate upper cloth known as 'Uttareeyam' and the lower fabric, forming the skirt. And as is the fashion today the colour of these two fabrics was the same, matched. This mode of dress can still be seen among women of Kerala and Sree Lanka.

Hanuman saw Sita in the Asoka forest wearing a single yellow fabric "PeethamEkenaSamveetam" (15-21) What about her upper cloth? what was the colour of that piece?

Hanuman went into deep analytical thinking whether the woman whom he saw was no other than Sita as he had already been disillusioned earlier by mistaking Mandodari for Sita. He began comparing the parts of ornaments and the dress. This intellectual eminence of Hanuman amazes the reader at every step in the epic. Thus Hanuman proves himself an emissary of a high order.

Identifying the yellow fabric worn by Sita, as skirt, Hanuman set to think of the yellow uttareeyam thrown by Sita, with her ornaments tied in it in a bundle. These two were of the same yellow colour, being matched. This made Anjaneya come to the conclusion that it was Sita for certain, who was seen sitting under the Asoka tree.

The jewellery of that time consisted of bracelets, ear rings, hair ornaments "Choodamani, rings (Anguleeyakam) studded with stones and corals. Strangely, mention is made of ornaments to the teeth: 'Swadamshtabharanam', (15-42) Even the teeth of women were not without decoration. May be, they must have been gold plates or tiny stones fixed to the teeth to give sparkle to the teeth.

Ornaments on the tree : Previously Anjaneya had a close watch on the ornaments found wrapped in yellow cloth and thrown by



## SPARKLES OF SUNDARA KANDA.

5

Sita on Rishyamooka hills . In Asoka Vana Anjaneya was looking at the ornaments hung at the end of the branches of Asoka tree . Sita was sitting under the same tree . Adhering to the custom that a woman distanced from her husband should neither wear ornaments nor flowers , Sita hung her ornaments at the end of the branches of Asoka tree . Therefore Hanuman felt certain that the woman was no other than Sita , as the ornaments hung , matched the description given by Rama before .

Did Sita throw away her ornaments at random, while being carried away by Ravana? Sita appears to have had the presence of mind even at such an hour of distress. She must have thrown only one of each pair, and retained the other one with her for future identification . May be, one bracelet, one ear ring and so on. Hanuman perceived that the one he had seen before in the bundle was not to be found on the tree and vice versa, "Tatra yanya vaheenani taanyaham nopalakshye yanyasya navaheenani tanee manee nasamsayah" (15-44). The ornaments he saw earlier in the cloth bundle were not to be found on the branches, and the things hung there were not to be found in the bundle. The missing factor became crucial.

How level-headed was Sita! How keen was Hanuman's observation ! And, lo, to what epic proportions, the sage poet Valmiki had gone in his meticulous depiction of details ! It is this feature of interesting minute details to be found in Sundarakanda, that merits the attention of a discerning reader. The micro form in a mega epic.

Another interesting feature arises, if we try to answer the question why should Sita hang the ornaments on the branch of the tree, instead of keeping them somewhere near her? In fact she hid the important jewel 'choodamani tied to the end of her sari' "tato vastragatam muktva divyam choodamani subham" (38-69). The answer again lends testimony to the keen intellectual perception of Sita. She exhibited her ornaments prominently on the tree, as she wanted them to serve as visible signs to the search party of Rama finding them towards her whereabouts . If the throwing of some of her ornaments on Rishyamooka , was the first step aimed at helping the persons who might be later searching for her , the hanging of the ornaments on the branch may be termed as its culmination .

Tokens: Hanuman was no common emissary . He was entrusted with the stupendous task of tracing the abducted Sita in a far off inaccessible , well- guarded island of a demon king. He was praised by Sita as 'Vikramatswatvam , Samardhas thvam , Prajnostvam ' powerful , efficient and shrewd . He had taken ' Anguleeyam ' as a token from Rama while starting on his errand . He gave it to Sita to prove his bonafides . He had taken another token from Sita her 'choodamani' , and offered it to Rama , indicative of his successful mission .

Languages :- Hanuman considered carefully the language he should employ while addressing himself to Sita . He must have rehearsed it in his mind . He was a great linguist , an erudite



scholar in Vedanta, Tarka, Vayakarna Mimamsa faculties. Rama at the very first sight of Hanuman could discover his abilities and attainments. And Hanuman pondered over the question whether he should talk in pure, chaste Sanskrit diction employed by the Brahmins of the time ("Dwijateeriva samskritam" {30 - 18}) or the spoken dialect of Sanskrit used by the common man. Rightly he decided upon the popular Sanskrit, lest Sita should mistake him as Ravana approaching her in disguise 'Avasyamava vaktaryam vakya mardhavat' (30-17)

It can thus be deduced, that at the time of Ramayana, there were two versions of spoken Sanskrit, the classic and the popular and Hanuman preferred the latter as best suited to his purpose.

Food and Drink: Anjaneya, spying in the palace of Ravana, came across various types of meat dishes and wines. Meats of several animals and different types of wines, and other intoxicants were described by Valmiki.

Cannibalism also must have been prevalent in the remote island of Lanka as the security guards of Sita would often threaten her that she would be used as their breakfast delicacy.

Sages and saintly persons were subsisting on roots and fruits available in the forest while they practised their austerities.

But the kings were not vegetarians nor teetotallers. Even Rama was said to be eating meat

and drinking wine. To the anxious enquiries of Sita about the welfare of Rama, Hanuman would tell Sita that in his great distress on the loss of his beloved wife, Rama would neither eat meat nor drink wine. ('na mamsa Raghavo b'huktena, na chaapi madhu sevate') (36 - 41.) Of course that meat must have been of a superior quality of a hunted animal and similar must be the drink too.

Surgery in Ramayana: Dexterity in surgery in the hoary age of Ramayana should surprise one and all. This makes one recall Susruta, the father of surgery, who it is said made experiments of blood transfusion with goat's blood!

Feeling helpless on all counts with suicidal tendencies rising uppermost in her mind, Sita began thinking that after the expiry of the ultimatum of the two-month period set by Ravana, the demon king would slay her by cutting to pieces as a surgeon would carve the dead embryo to pieces to bring it out from the womb of the mother, "garbhastha jantoriva salya krintaha" (28-6), Isn't it a piece of skillful surgery!

The Hair Style: Women were wearing hair in one or two, or three braids. Hanuman saw Sita wearing single braid ("Ekaveni"). There was a woman security guard called Dwijeta with two braids, and the benevolent demon-guard 'Trijata' (88-84) having three braids. There must have been individuality exhibited in varied hair styles of the women of those times.

Some social customs: In the first chapter of Sundarakanda (1-47) Anjaneya's flight



## SPARKLES OF SUNDARA KANDA.

7

into the air as a jet plane from the hill, Mahendra, was described at length by Valmiki. It almost resembles the take-off of a space shuttle or a jet plane of the modern age. The impact was such that huge trees were uprooted and blown high into the air before falling down to earth. This exercise was compared to the social practice of following a departing guest to some distance, say, upto crossing a stream or a river bank ("Swabandhu miva bandhava"(1-47).)

This analogy of the ancient practice holds good even to this day among the rural folk in some villages. In cities also we give send-off to the guests at bus stands, railway stations or airports and return home.

Again with a humane touch, Valmiki made Sita request Hanuman while he was about to take leave of her to stay for one more day as his presence gave her extreme relief from the gloom she had been experiencing.. ( "Visrantasvo gamisshyasi ") (39 - 20 ) " you can leave tomorrow taking rest ". Asking a dear guest to stay on for a day or two is still the most common practice among people having cordial relationship.

**Two Suicidal Attempts :** Strangely we come across two suicidal attempts in Sundarakanda resorted to by no mean characters, but by noble characters, Hanuman and Sita. One wonders how Sage Valmiki could depict these attempts by two great characters, while scriptures prohibit any attempt at suicide. Of all the poets, why should Valmiki resort to

this step, is a significant question warranting close scrutiny.

Firstly it should be understood that Valmiki was the most humane poet endowed with deep feelings. He was a murderous dacoit, as the legend goes, transformed into an epic poet, after long penance and devotion. He was even unmindful of the anthills grown on him during his long penance. And the origin of Ramayana is traced to the first pangs of his heart when he was moved by the poignant scenario of the crying of a bird who was bereaved of her mate, being killed by a hunter. The sloka "ma nishada pratishtam" emerged spontaneously at the heart-rending scene of the shrieking bird. This pang became the birth pang of Ramayana.

We can observe the same poignant reflections while Valmiki portrayed the agony of Sita in Asoka forest separated from Rama. If this analogy is extended further, one can understand why Valmiki described the two great suicidal attempts by Hanuman and Sita. In a way it can be understood that it was only a Valmiki that could touch the cords of human life in its intensity touching the depths of the depressed mood of human beings. No man, however great, is free from moments of depression and suicidal tendencies at one time or other, whether it be, brief or long, light or intense. And Valmiki played on the strings of the gloomy mood of human beings, creating a melancholy music of the human soul. He dived deep to fathom the lives of people at the lowest ebb of life.



Touching this dark aspect, the sage - poet would at once turn the pendulum to show the emergence of sunshine of life from its blackside, He used darkness to serve as a foil to the following brilliance and to offer an immortal lesson to the humanity not to give way to dark, negative thoughts, but to entertain positive thinking, required for a successful life. His immortal words thus roll, "Anirvedah sriyo moolam", (12 - 10) "Freedom from sad thoughts only leads one to success".

Anjaneya too was in a similar situation. Not able to trace Sita after his strenuous nocturnal exercise of investigation in the palace of Ravana, Hanuman began pondering over the consequence arising out of the failure of his mission. That would trigger a cycle of deaths if it were to be known that Sita's whereabouts were untraceable. To ward off such a serious calamity of a string of deaths, Hanuman began contemplating that it would not be in the best interest of every one to return home with the failure of his mission.

The process of the suicidal thinking ran thus "Shall I burn myself in fire, or shall I die by starvation, so that my body may be preyed upon by birds and beasts? I find that 'Niryana' or death by starvation also known as 'Prayopavesam' is a practice even accepted by sages for terminating one's life. I may even drown myself to death". (13-12,13,14,15).

Valmiki thus depicting the dark forebodings of Hanuman, would turn to the situation

showing the sunny side of life leading to the success of his mission, concluding his significant message to mankind that man should live on with hope. 'Jeevan bhadra ni pasyathi' (13-46,47), "Man can achieve happy results (one day or other) if he continues living".

Discounting the negative thoughts and recovering from the depressed mood Hanuman retrieves his adventurous spirit and praised Rama, Lakshmana and Sita in the famous sloka 'Namostu Ramaya sa Lakshmanaya....' (13-59): He started again on his entrusted mission. This sloka is considered by many as having Mantric effect and people caught in doldrums of life are advised to recite this sloka for their benefit. This Sloka is said to contain Beeja Akshara, words with high benevolent cosmic vibrations and this is the great gift of Valmiki to mankind.

Coming to Sita's attempt at suicide, it is described that Hanuman found Sita ready to commit suicide using her single long braid of hair as a rope to hang herself on the branch of the tree, ("Venyud gradhanam griheetva..... seeghra maham gamishyami yamasya moolam" (28-18). Through this act she wanted to go to the land of death, Yamaloka. Sita even earlier considered about death, thus "even man or woman can not end the life, if destiny does not ordain it" (25-12). Again she would plead that man is not given even the freedom to give up his life (25-20). "But at this darkest moment in her life Sita felt the presence of omens and got over the dark mood.



## SPARKLES OF ŚUNDARA KANDA.

9

Hence Sundarakanda is considered the most sacred part of Ramayana . It contains the two great Mantric slokas " Namostu Ramaya sa Lakshmanaya (13 - 50 ) , and " Jayathyathibalo Ramo (42 - 33 ) , said to confer benevolent effects upon the person who recites them in

devotion . Studying Sundarakanda , it is said , one gets 'paritapopasamanam ' freedom from stress and sadness . It also ensures success in one's life. □

'By and large, the object of human life as renunciation of the world and attainment of salvation presented to the people during the last few centuries, was an ascetic path so high and transcendental, that it left millions of them , all except a small minority , mentally and spiritually ill - nourished and often wrongly nourished , because it had no message for them and it was indigestible to them . There was very little stress on social ethics along with it's civil and social virtues and responsibilities which they could understand and digest and from which they could derive profit and brighten their life on the earth below . Religion as presented in the Gita , is a full philosophy which included the positivist dimension of DHARMA or social ethics and ABHYU DAYA or social welfare along with MUKTI or spiritual welfare .

-SWAMI RANGANADHANANDA



## THE EXPATRIATE SENSIBILITY OF A.K.RAMANUJAN

DR. V. Ayothi

**While talking about the Indian expatriate poets, Bruce King aptly remarks**

Indian expatriate poets do not write from the position of a distinct foreign community, such as the exiled black or West Indian novelists, but their writing reflects the perspective of someone between two cultures. They may look back on India with nostalgia, satirically celebrating their liberation or asserting their biculturalism, but they also look skeptically and wryly on their new home land as outsiders, with a feeling of something having been lost in the process of growth. The ability to tolerate, accommodate and absorb other cultures without losing the consciousness of being Indian marks the expatriate poets. (209 - 10)

Bruce King refers to Ramanujan's ability to live peacefully in two different worlds -- the world of his self and memory which is 'within' him and the world of the present which is 'without' and explains that the core of the essential self remains as an inner world, but this is modified by changed circumstances and decisions (215).

A.K.Ramanujan himself endorses this view when he says, you can not entirely live in the past, neither can you entirely live in the present, because we are not like that. We are both these things. The past never passes. Either the individual past or historical past or cult-

ural past. It is with us, it is what gives us the richness of -- what you call it -- the richness of understanding. And the richness of expression. (Jha 5)

To express it in the words of E.N.Lall Ramanujan's poems take their origin in a mind that is simultaneously Indian and Western -- Indian mode of experiencing an emotion and the western mode of defining it (44).

As a third world expatriate poet, Ramanujan, unlike his western counterparts who are keen to escape the society which has lost its values, hails from a social background noted for its familial bonds, communal and religious harmony--a rich tradition in fact. He has also carried with him his cultural roots from India and therefore his works do not contain elements of existential rootlessness, which is a predominant factor in the works of the unity of his migration.

As Ramanujan was alive to the sharp difference between the enriching culture and tradition of India and the west, his sense of nostalgia got intensified with passing years. The readers are driven to juxtapose the "Spiritual, community-oriented, tolerant value system of India and the materialistic, individualistic, racist, power-hungry exploitative system of the west (Kirpal 5),"



## THE EXPATRIATE SENSIBILITY OF A.K. RAMAN

11

The myth of the white man's superiority probably becomes meaningless. And hence, the poet goes back with renewed spirit and vigour to his people and his country. Therefore, a major theme of Ramanujan's poetry has been his obsession with the familial and racial past and memory always plays a vital and creative role.

The formative influence of religion which provided him a system to know the meaning of life is rich in him because he grew up in a traditional middle class Southern Hindu Brahmin family. He retained his faith in the Hindu philosophy of the Unity Consciousness. His acceptance of the oneness of all life is evident from his poem "Christmas":

*For a moment, I no*

*Longer know*

*Leaf from parrot*

*Or branch from root*

*nor, for that matter*

*that tree*

*from you or me. (S 30-31)*

The man, the tree the parrot possess identical creative impulses and therefore they must be considered as expressions of the same creative force. Though the western tradition also accepts God as the creator of the universe, it seems to maintain the dichotomy between

Man and Nature and Man and lower creations like animals and birds. Though Wordsworth could, for instance, find a "Lurking soul" within the "meanest flower", he could not equate it with the human soul. To him and to poets like Robert Frost, the objects of nature, however closer they may be to the life of man, can not become 'the man'.

This kind of difference between the oriental and occidental traditions is also emphasized further through the tree image in the same poem. The bare leafless tree standing outside his window in the USA and the lively tree seen out of his window in India which is more than a mere "stiff geometrical shape" are images that bring to his mind the two different cultures. After his death the poet desires to "rise in the sap of trees" and "feel the weight / of honey - hives in my branching / and the burlap weave of weaver - birds in my hair." ("A Hindu to his Body" R 9). The oneness of life could be illustrated through the example of the sap. Though the sap itself is a colourless pigment, it creates all colours and all colours converge into one creative source.

Ramanujan is not blind to certain superstitious aspects of his religion. The Hindu principle of non - violence sometimes reminds of cowardice to the poet who has lived in a country known for rationality, dynamism, fast scientific and technological growth and violence. There is the danger of the principle degenerating into callousness and indifference in actual practice. As the Hindu is not expected to hurt a fly or a spider, his great grandfather remained a helpless victim of and silent spectator to the adultery of



his wife. ( " The Hindu : He Doesn't Hurt a Fly or a Spider either " ). In his poem " Obituary " ( R ) he recalls his father's death , and comments ironically on rituals and ceremonies associated with the cremation of the dead .

In " Love Poem for a Wife I " Ramanujan, in a mock - serious tone pulls up the Hindus who

*betroth us before birth ,  
forestalling separate horoscopes  
and mother's first periods ,  
and wed us in the oral cradle  
and carry marriage into  
the namelessness of childhoods .*

Incidentally he also refers to the Egyptians who

*.....had it right :  
their kings had sisters for queens  
to continue the incests  
of childhood into marriage .*

As an expatriate writer , Ramanujan is a 'teacher' and he does not revolt against his society like the western counterpart .

The revolutionary zeal which permeates the poetry of the West like those of Shelley and Byron for instance , and the humanistic vision or the social concern and commitment found in their poetry is totally missing in him .

Expatriation has not caused any setback in his growth as an artist because he has not lost touch with his mother country . The mother figure also remains a dominant figure . In " Of Mothers , among other things " ( R ) he depicts the bond between his mother and himself , which is prevalent in all traditional societies . The poet "Smell ( s ) upon this twisted / back bone tree silk and white / petal of my mother's youth ." Suddenly , he realizes that " the silk and white petal " of her youth has changed and now she has become old and "her sarees / do not cling : they hang , loose / feather of a one - time wing ." Viney Kirpal ( 78 ) , while writing about Third World expatriate fiction says that Oedipal , incestuous impulses are implicit in the tug that the son feels towards his mother and motherland . He has the usual love - hate relationship with his motherland which characterizes intense relationships . Some times , she is a figure of awe and authority ; at other times she is the mother , the only home and only companion as in the case of A . K . Ramanujan . The journey motive that is predominant in Third World expatriate writings could be perceived here at the level of the mind . The poet's mind often undertaking a 'pilgrimage ' to the mother or motherland . And the constat movement represents transition from one mode of being to another .



## THE EXPATRIATE SENSIBILITY OF A.K. RAMANUJAN

13

Ramanujan's expatriate sensibility includes an objective and accurate portrayal of both countries - particularly the native country. In his poem "A River" he gives minute details about the nature of the river and the condition of the bridge across it and so on. While many poets of the past and present sang only about the floods and presented a romantic and idealistic picture and called it a creative force initiating life on earth, Ramanujan offers information about the other side of the picture by explaining the destructive nature. While admitting that the river in Madurai "has water enough / to be poetic / about only once a year", he is alive to the fact that

*it carries away*

*in the first half - hour*

*three village houses*

*a couple of cows*

*named Gopi and Brinda*

*and one pregnant woman*

*expecting identical twins*

*with no mole on their bodies*

*with different - coloured diapers*

*to tell them apart.*

By showing the river as a preserver and destroyer, the poet gives a complete picture. The

havoc caused by floods and drought suggested by the "sand - ribs", runs contrary to the poetic myth - making tendency of Tamil poets who ignored reality and the poem itself, as Bruce remarks, is an attempt to debunk the romanticization of traditional Tamil culture. ( 210 )

In the poetic sensibility of A.K. Ramanujan, we find a coalescence of the East and the West - the inner world of his Indian heritage and experience and the objectivity and accuracy of the Western poetic tradition. Though his memory is sharp and his vision of Indian society is comprehensive he can not be called a nostalgic traditionalist. Though he was alive to western modes of expression, changes and attitudes, we cannot conclude that he accepted them fully and advocated modernisation and westernization. As in the case of several expatriates, Ramanujan's works include nostalgia, inwardness, documentary realism; but there is no idealization and the vision does not become dark in spite of the ironic and satiric tone.

**Textual Note :** References to the source appear in parenthesis within the text. The following editions of A.K. Ramanujan's works have been used for the present study :

The Striders . London : OUP , 1966 .

The Relations London : OUP , 1971 .

The abbreviations of titles are used as noted below :

The Striders ( S )



The Relations ( R )

*Works Cited* Jha , Rama , " A Conversation with A . K . Ramanujan " , The Humanities Review , Vol . 3 , No . 1 , January - June 1981 , pp 5 - 13

King , Bruce . Modern Indian Poetry in English . Delhi : OUP , 1987 .

Kirpal , Viney . The Third World Novel of Expatriation . New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt . Ltd . , 1989 .

Lall , E . N . " Beyond Poetry as Family History " , The Poetry of Encounter . New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt . Ltd . , 1983 . PP . 42 - 64

' No endeavour is in vain  
Its reward is in the doing  
And the rapture of pursuing  
Is the prize the vanquished gain '

- H . W . LONGFELLOW

' Every character is a synthetic product . I took Sophia , ground her up with Tania , and what emerged was Natash ' .

- TOLSTOY



# 'HOME' IN IVY COMPTON BURNETT'S NOVELS :

## A STUDY

DR. T. ASOKA RANI.

"Pure " is the appropriate epithet to describe the novel of Ivy Compton-Burnett who took care to see that her fiction was not contaminated by political, religious and such like factors. The credit for this epithet goes to Robert Liddell when he says: "Miss Compton-Burnett has freed herself from all irrelevances in order to write the pure novel"<sup>1</sup>. He commends this approach as the concentration does not get diffused from the purely domestic aspects.

However, as irony would have it, her excessive exposition of the impure aspects of personal relations within the domestic confines has the unfortunate effect of polluting the entire atmosphere. Hers is not the conventional type of fiction depicting 'home-truths' in a simple, direct manner. Keeping the deceptively normal home-front as the facade, she delved deeper to unravel the ugly side of the outwardly sophisticated and respectable British family life. So shocking was the denouement that Frederick R. Karl was prompted to sum it up as :

"-----Miss Compton -Burnett has of course taken the Victorian family novel and turned it inside out, revealing the dirt behind the romantic exterior.... she recognised that below normal social behaviour lies a swamp of discontent, mixed motives, and deception."<sup>2</sup>

Her attempt to turn the domestic novel 'inside out' was with a specific purpose. Probing far beneath the veneer of respectability and sophistication, she found evil lurking there in several manifestations, silently eating into the very roots of happiness. What she discovered was that overbearing selfishness, total lack of concern for others, adoption of means, however unethical, to achieve one's ends were the dominating features which bedevilled the otherwise happy domestic life in her chosen society.

'Home' which is the focal point of interest in all her novels is very exclusive in the sense that it is devoid of several normal aspects of family life in inter - personal as well as social relationships. Family unhappiness is the curse of every home. Disintegration in a family begins with the straining of the emotional and psychological relationships between its members. The dictatorial and high - handed attitude of elders towards children is another major factor causing friction in a family. Different kinds of inconceivable evils figure in her novels, but they are portrayed in the most suitable and covert manner possible. Marital infidelity leading to liberal distribution of illegitimate children, all sorts of sexual aberrations, manipulation of wills for personal benefits and many other forms of fraud abound in her world. There are even murders skilfully manoeuvred and accomplished.



A review in the *Times Literary Supplement* compliments Ivy Compton - Burnett for not having omitted, unlike her precursors, to ignore the 'tangled roots of life'. The reviewer defines 'home' as "that small community shut in together from infancy into domestic turbulence, domestic adventure, domestic feuds, alliances, contests, affections, jealousies, resentments, detestations, hostilities, unkindnesses, despairs - that intimidating trinity of parents and children on which life is built." <sup>3</sup>

The 'Home' in all her novels is governed by the 'law of the jungle' with the sole motto 'survival of the fittest'. Frederick Karl explains:

"How does one sustain himself in what amounts to a predatory jungle? .... Neither side is restricted to gentleman's weapons. Nagging is raised to an art, and each side dogs the other, looking for an advantage, trying to thrust in a verbal dagger. For in the destruction of the other person, whether actual or figurative, the individual gains his own life."

In depicting such darker aspects of domestic life, Ivy Compton - Burnett was moved by a burning desire to highlight by contrast the innate virtues of home - life. Her intention, as R. D. Sarkar opines, was not merely

"... to trace the gradual decay of the Victorian home, but to explore the unhappy facts so as to bring out the very essence of home - life".

One remarkable feature, however in Ivy Compton - Burnett's novels is that her 'homes' are inexorably drawn into the vortex of collapse through internal strife and then, as by some contrivance, she rescues them, if not all, at least in the majority of cases. This is as it should be, for it cannot certainly be her purpose to sound the death knell of the family life in her chosen stratum of society in the late Victorian England.

In almost all the novels, home, appearing to be on the verge of collapse, survives by its inherent strength for adaptability and thus a possible tragic conclusion is avoided. All the 'homes' of Ivy Compton - Burnett are found to be stabilised by exposure to stress. In *Brothers and Sisters*, the stace children leave the place of disgrace and scandal in the hope of starting a new life. Further incest is prevented by the timely revelation of their parents' incest. In *Men and Wives*, Harriet's death relieves the house of the tyranny. The children come round and accept the course recommended by their mother. In *More Women than Men*, Gabriel along with his father makes a separate home away from Josephine's tyranny. The Edgeworth's home in *A House and Its Head* is saved from ruin by the marriage of Duncan to the good - natured Cassandra. Death of Sabine and marriage of Hetta save the home of Ponsonby's (*Daughters and Sons*) from collapse. John Ponsonby's marriage to Edith Hallam brings peace to the family. In *A family and a Fortune*, the reconciliation between the brothers, Edgar and Dudley, and the loss of Matty's power helps resurrect the Gaveston



## HOME IN IVY COMPTON BURNETT'S NOVELS : A STUDY 17

home . In *Parents and Children* , Fulbert returns home to save Eleanor from bigamy and the children become happy with the restoration of both the parents .

In *Elders and Betters*, Anna's marriage and her intention of setting up a separate home relieves the homes , both of the Donnes and of the Calderons from tyranny and unhappiness . Horace's reformation helps to free the Lambs' home ( *Manservant and Maidservant* ) of tyranny and Charlotte's decision not to leave the home helps to stabilise it . Happy reconciliation is found in *Darkness and Day* where the problem of incest troubling the family is found to be a misapprehension. The husband's pre-marital affair or the wife's illegitimacy troubles them no longer. The Clares' home ( *The Present and the Past* ) is saved by the death of the tyrant father and the removal from the neighbourhood of his divorced wife with her children. Miranda's ( *Mother and Son* ) death makes the members of the family breathe freely. The adultery of both the husband and the wife does not interfere with the stability of the home. Verena's exit and Ellen's return stabilise the Mowbray's home in *A Father and His Fate*. Miles Mowbray has to bow his head in the end to the greater forces of family unity. Simon's ( *A Heritage and its History* ) timely confession of his incest avoids further incest. He regains his lost inheritance and peace is restored in the Challoners' home. In the Middleton home ( *the Mighty and their fall* ) affection between father and daughter is restored and peace and happiness return to their family. Understanding and adjustment of Ada saves the

home of the Egertons in *A God and His Gifts*. Timely financial help prevents the Heriot family in *The Last and the First* from falling. Removal of Eliza from power brings back peace.

Even death does not shatter the lives of people. No survivor grieves for the deceased. Immediately after the death of wife or husband they contemplate second or even third marriage. Life is not too difficult even for Gabriel ( *More Women than Men* ) who has lost his wife, very soon after his marriage. The only exception seems to be Sophia ( *Brothers and Sisters* ) who grieves a good deal and makes the lives of her children miserable. Home appears to be an abiding shelter for the members even in the face of threat to its peace. Christopher Gillie sums up:

"..... a family can proceed equably until it undergoes stress, and the balance of this one is upset, and then restored, by its encounter with multiple stresses."<sup>6</sup>

"If insults, outrages, incest, adultery, murders and so on which abound in Ivy Compton Burnett's 'homes' do really happen in life, " ... the result would inevitably be a fine quarrel and the dissolution of all ties. But here the family remains together .... "<sup>7</sup>

Frederick R. Karl comments on this feature:

"..... some spark of vestigial feeling usually keeps the family together. Perhaps it is not feeling that finally unifies, but the law of the Jungle."<sup>8</sup>



If, however, some venture to leave the home for good, it becomes inevitable for them to be back soon. Those who marry and set up families are an exception to this phenomenon. Hetta ( *Daughters and Sons* ) leaves home wanting to teach a lesson to the neglecting family. Disappointment in love makes Dudley ( *A Family and a Fortune* ) leave the house whereas the desire to escape torture of a step-mother prompts Hermia to leave home. However, all these stage a return after a while, unable to bear the rigours of living outside the home.

In the home, they remain semi-developed, immature, clinging, and protected, but at least alive. Outside, where the wicked world awaits them with an entirely different set of values, they can hope for no solace whatsoever.

Rabindranath Sarkar expresses more or less the same view when he points out :

They know that the home can be a nest of evils, yet there is nothing to replace it, for the roots of their life lie deep down in it.<sup>10</sup>

Even after the most shocking revelations of incest, adultery and illegitimacy, home is kept intact and life is somehow continued.

" . . . . . This family's . . . . . potency as a force that can still hold the allegiance of its members is perhaps the most fundamental feature of Miss Compton - Burnett's work . "<sup>11</sup>

## REFERENCES

1. Robert Liddell : A Treatise on the Novel, (Jonathan Cape, London, 1965), p. 148.
2. Frederick R. Karl, 'The Intimate world and Ivy Compton - Burnett', A Reader's Guide to the Contemporary English Novel (Thomas & Hudson, London, 1972) p. 203.
3. 'The Unhappy Family Game', The Times Literary Supplement, (March 22, 1947) p. 126.
4. KARL, p. 202.
5. Rabindranath Sarkar, Ivy Compton - Burnett : A Trend in English Fiction ( Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta, 1979 ), p. 146.
6. Christopher Gillie, Movements in English Literature, 1900 - 1940 ( C . U . P . , London, 1975 ). p. 109.
7. 'Analysis by Dialogue', Review of Daughters and Sons, The Times Literary Supplement, (April, 10, 1937). p. 273.
8. KARL, p. 201.
9. KARL, p. 218.
10. SARKAR, p. 147.



## HOME IN IVY COMPTON BURNETT'S NOVELS : A STUDY

19

11. 'Family Feeling', Review of A Father and His Fate, The Times Literary Supplement, ( August 16, 1957 ) p. 493

R E F E R E N C E S

1. Water Allen, The English Novel ( Penguin, Gt. Britain, 1970 ) p.82 ( Jarrolds Publishers Ltd., London, 1954 )

2 S. Diana Neill, A short History of the English Novel Vol. V ( Barnes & Noble, Inc. New York, 1969 ) p. 187.

3. Ernest A. Baker, The History of the English novel Vol. V ( Barnes & Noble, Inc. New York, 1969 ) p. 187.

4. Encyclopaedia Britannica (William Benton, Chicago, 1968 ) Vol. 16, p. 678.

5. Harriet Martineau, Autobiography quoted from Kathleen Tillotson, Novels of the Eighteen Forties, (O.U.P., London, 1956 ) p. 135.

6. George Saintsbury, A Short History of English Literature, (Macmillan & Co., London, 1953 ) p. 749.

7. ALLEN, . p. 199.

8. BAKER, 3 ; vol. VIII, p. 111.

9. Robert Liddell, A Treatise on the Novel, ( Jonathan Cape, London, 1965 ), p. 148.

'The dreams and hopes of man, Their joys and sorrows, Their delight over the beauty of nature and distress over the misfortunes of men, are themes of all great literature. There is a unity of feelings and ideas, a common sensitiveness to life's troubles, a common yearning which eludes thoughts and words for the mysterious something which we tremblingly call God who is working in us and shines with increasing radiance, if only we seek for Him who impels us willingly to build temples and create poems'.

- Dr.S. Radhakrishnan



## TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Dr . D . ANJANEYULU

In discussing the interaction between tradition and modernity it might be useful to examine Tradition in its proper perspective. Etymologically, it is derived from the Latin root 'Traditionis' literally meaning 'handing over', 'surrender' or 'transmission'. But how long or how old is this 'tradition'? Where does it begin and where does it end?

The amusing part of it, however, is that almost everyone, who claims to follow tradition, with or without the tonsorial, sartorial accoutrements, seems to understand and implement it in his or her own way. According to one, dowry for a bride, and marriage within the closest family circle ( maternal uncle's son, paternal aunt's daughter, and the like) are an integral part of this. ( Is this not as good as incest, asked a north Indian friend of mine; In any case, have such Hindus any moral right to point a finger at Muslim friends for similar practices).

Forgetting these practices , let us go back to the origin of tradition itself in its primordial form . It takes many generations to make a little history , and a lot of history to make a little tradition , said Dr . S . Radhakrishnan . His emphasis is on loyalty to tradition and devotion to truth . No easy task for anyone to perform . Pandit Nehru does not use the same word but talks of ' culture ' instead . He says :

" Every culture has certain values attached to it , limited and conditioned by that culture . The people governed by that culture take these values for granted and attribute a permanent validity to them " .

What are the values that we would cherish in our tradition ? And are we making any effort to keep them alive in our own time ? For the sake of convenience , we can take them , in a rough and ready manner , to be : 1 )Equality (especially between men and women ) ; 2) Liberty of the individual , to the extent that it does not militate against the state ; and 3 )social awareness for the common good .

In asserting the first point , most people who are fond of the concept of the golden age , invoke the period of *Rigveda* and *Sama Veda* which may be placed two or three millennia before Christ , in which we are told that there was freedom and education for women and equality. According to the Vedic scholar , Altekhar , during this period , " ----- a husband and his wife are described as taking equal part in sacrificial rites , which were conducted jointly . There is evidence to show that musical chanting of the *Sama Veda* was done by the wife . . . . The wife participated with her husband in the preparation of the offering , the consecration of the fire and the offering of oblations . Thus , they were equal participants with men in Vedic sacrifices .



## TRADITION AND MODERNITY

21

It is also mentioned that in Vedic society widows were not required to perform Sati nor were they subject to other inhuman disabilities and indignities including deformity by tonsure. They could either stay alone if they so chose, have children by *niyoga* (levirate), or remarry like anybody else, with no let or hindrance.

When and how did all this idyllic state change for the worse? Some feel it happened during the Epic and Smriti period (i.e., a couple of centuries before and a few after Christ). The Smritikaras, especially Manu, were not only brazenly malechauvinist, but confusingly ambivalent in their attitude to women in general, who were treated as tempting, impure, unreliable, lacking in judgement and deserving of no freedom.

Worse things were to follow, after the Muhammeden invasions in the eleventh and subsequent centuries, when child marriages and some kind of purdah began to be practised - the former as a possible mode of protection from abduction; and the latter as an imitation of the powerful predatory hordes, who became the ruling races in due course.

Some kind of relief, in the shape of social stability, with juristic equality among the masses, came in only with the establishment of British power almost all over India, towards the latter part of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was in the middle of the last century that people began to feel the effect of the Rule of Law, when the British established their courts, for administration of justice, not so

much on the basis of their Common Law, but guided largely by the principles of Roman jurisprudence.

Against this background, what are we to understand, when somebody in the south says that it was according to the Hindu / Indian tradition that he had to get his minor daughter married (disregarding all laws on the age of consent); another orthodox man or woman insists that his or her widowed sister has to be tonsured; and yet another group in Rajasthan celebrates in high and holy style the Sati of the young lady, Roop Kanwar (over a century and half after the revolutionary legislation of Lord William Bentinck)?

What tradition are they following - the Vedic, the post-Vedic (Epic and Smriti) or that of the post-Muslim invasion, or their own family practice, not going back farther than that of their grandfathers and great grandfathers? It is also a great pity that some Muttheads, worshipped as Gods and gurus by certain linguistic, sub-regional sub-castes, bother themselves more about such *nitya-naimittika* Karmas, as tonsorial and sartorial injunctions for widows and married men than about tackling problems of philosophic doubt, for which they are probably not intellectually equipped by their education or training. As a result ritual takes the place of religion as a whole and practised gestures, learnt by rote, are used as mystic symbols standing for the essence of its philosophy.

One question yet remains: does the tradi-



tion which many claim to follow have any noticeable effect on their personal character or has it improved their code of conduct ? Has it had any worthwhile impact on our social practices - like dowry , caste system and unplanned families ?

Anyone who has read Sir James Fraser's '*The Golden Bough*', which mentions a variety of fertility rites all over the world, would realise that rituals and ceremonies like the attainment of puberty ("Rajaswala" ) or pregnancy at a certain stage of progress ('Seemantam' ) are not only primitive but altogether out of date and even more out of place in metropolitan cities like Madras, Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi. For the life of me, I can't understand why there should be wedding processions, with the bridegroom on a white charger like Prithvi Raj or Shivaji, along with a few in an open luxury limousine, and the rest on foot, but all in colourful costume, obstructing traffic on busy thoroughfares like Radhakrishnan Salai and RK Mutt Road in Mylapore Madras and else where. Is this to be considered a blend of tradition and modernity or a caricature of tradition by those who haven't the foggiest notion of either ?

But then, what exactly is modernity ? Is it to be identified with the products of modern technology like aeroplanes, air conditioners, computers, telex and fax ? Or getting a green card in the US, the land of automobiles, dollars and other opportunities ? It is common experience for an Indian youth, a doctorate- holder in nuclear physics or computer science, settled in Connecticut

or California to write to his parents to select a bride for him or what occurs more often, the parents forcing one on him ? And that too with a matching dowry, which would come in handy in disposing of his younger sister to a "suitable" boy ? Is it tradition or modernity, or a bit of both ?

There are, presumably, as many ideas about modernity as there are persons who claim to be modernists. It cannot certainly be equated with Westernisation or industrialisation. Even a typical modernist and avowed humanist like Nehru is obliged to be cautious in defining it or at least explaining it. Referring to the better type of modern mind, he says: " It is governed by a practical idealism for social betterment. The ideals which move it represent the spirit of the age, the Zeitgeist, the Yugadharma----- Humanity is God and social service its religion".

With his wide learning and well - meant optimism, Jawaharlal Nehru, classifying these ideals under two heads - humanism and the scientific spirit, saw a growing synthesis between these two, resulting in a kind of " scientific humanism ". But it is more easily said than done, from what we are able to watch of contemporary society, where there is double - think and double - speak in every stratum of society. "Scientific humanism" therefore remains a dream and mirage.

Quite a few conservatives, whose understanding of 'tradition' is not only uncertain but woefully unreliable, tend to argue that truth is not affected by time. Dr. Radhakrishnan re-



## TRADITION AND MODERNITY

23

futes this argument in words which can hardly be improved upon : " Truth may be immutable , but the form in which it is embodied consists of elements , which admit of change . We may take our spirit from the past , - - - - but the body and the pulse must be the present . It is forgotten that religion , as it is today , is itself the product of ages of changes and there is no reason why its forms should not undergo fresh changes so long as the spirit demands it . It is possible to remain faithful to the letter and yet pervert the whole spirit " .

As far as India is concerned , our attitude to tradition , covering rituals , ceremonies and social practices , has to change , with the spirit of the age , the inexorable imperatives of time and space . It is atrocious ( anti - social because of avoidable burning of enormous quantities of ghee ) for instance , on the part of any government to allow , if not encourage , *putrakameshtiyagas* - ( i . e . sacrifices to induce the birth of sons to childless couples ) . And yet such things have been done with the muted blessings of the powers that be . It is no less objectionable to give a *carte blanche* to certain religious groups ( for their vote banks ) to violate the provisions of IPC , CRPC , and even the Constitution itself on the procreation of children , with no regard for the principle of family planning .

Now for a word or two about modernism : Is it to be identified with new modes of transport and communication , personal dress or interior decoration , handling crockery and cutlery ? One may be upto date in all these aids and implements and yet remain primitive in one's attitude to social stratification and mating customs and practices . The changes have to be more integral to the human personality . In the words of the great liberal , John Stuart Mill , ( in his autobiography ) : " - - - - - no great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible until a great change takes place in the fundamental constitution of their modes of thought .... From which it can be argued that mere changes in the country's political constitution by themselves will not do for the purpose in view . "

It is the duty of thinking citizens to separate the living tradition from the dead and discard the latter , in the interest of genuine modernity . Their endeavour must be to bring the essence of religion into line with the spirit of science . They must also remember that legislation alone will not do to change evil customs and practices ( dowry and gender prejudice ) that are deep rooted . A Herculean effort in social awareness and collective action is unavoidable to change them towards a happy blend of tradition and modernity for true progress . □

' The man who knows how to split the atom but has no love in his heart , is a monster '

- Jiddu Krishna Murthy



## MY PREMONITION ( A POEM )

Madhusudan N. Vadiyar

After my death , a premonition I saw  
 A tender age death Premature, I was raw  
 The first voice that I heard  
 was of man in flock , in herd  
 ' A true friend and a noble man '  
 said as soon as he ran .  
 My girl friend's waiting at the Opera  
 I forgot the appointment , Sheela or Vera  
 A fine Sunday morning time  
 said one , a fake mourning time  
 My plant too whispered aloud  
 " Who'll water me if nobody's around ? "  
 A debt to pay as shopkeeper's fate  
 and red as angry ready to confiscate .  
 My tenant waiting out of anxiety  
 out -waiting his clients with money plenty  
 The corpse carrier right on duty  
 Hope I get twenty out of pity  
 A lambeth grave was in booking  
 a cheap bargain , no mourners to sing  
 Finally among the garbage waste  
 A dilapidated coffin , still for them it was best  
 A last look and the cover was laid  
 ' His wish be fulfilled ' they said  
 As everyone took to their heels  
 tragedy to none but itself feels .  
 Light as I turned to float  
 above as feather in coat

of their callousness gave me a dose .  
 A beautiful garden passing by  
 fresh lake and chirpers at fly  
 A fragrance felt my nose's size  
 a deep breath and my closed eyes  
 A resight, a glimpse, a wink to see  
 the palace, pleasure and men in glee  
 A golden fairy waiting, I met  
 'Love at first sight' you'll bet  
 Angels and fairies at their love best  
 deeply involved hearts, from tip to crest  
 In heaven surely landed me  
 for good deeds and virtue, dear me  
 More often I tried best  
 some more time, till then I did rest:  
 A castle emerald - studded green.  
 Rubies and topaz, sapphires keen  
 An aroma kitchen took me in  
 a hungry myself set out fin  
 But later on it was I that saw  
 Black coal and people undistinguished  
 With a closer look I had been dismay'd  
 They were none but my foes disdained  
 Sinners those really were  
 Who mocked me death bare  
 Sooner had they travelled in  
 and served in hell in a miserable inn.

' A man can go without food for two days , but without poetry - never .

- BAUDELAIRE



## LEARNING BY UPSASANA

( An indigenous learning technology )

Dr . P . SUBBARAYAN

*The author has extracted an indigenous learning technology known as learning by Upasana from ancient Indian texts , Veda etc . , Upasana means chanting a code word which develops the mental capacities . It is in vogue even today . The author is confident that this super technology of learning best - fits the experimental set up .----- Editor*

Learning is the fundamental psychological process manifested in innumerable adjustment patterns of individuals with their environments - social , and physical throughout their life - span . " Learning is essentially a transfer technology . A content in any form - cognitive , affective , or psycho - motor transfers to a learner by a learned (Peri 1994 ) " . Western Psychology defined learning as a relatively permanent change in personality ( including cognitive , affective , attitudinal , motivational , behavioural , experiential and the like ) and reflects a change in permanance , usually brought about by practice , although it may arise from insight or other factors including memory ( Bigge 1994) . Endless efforts are being made in the West since the golden Greek period up-to-date to understand the process of learning . As a result , to-day we have about 30 learning theories with subtle difference .

Very recently , the researcher , Peri (1992,1994) developed two different abstract learning technologies viz , learning by

Aptavakyam , and learning by upasana , extracted from the ancient Indian texts: Vedas, Upanishads, Darsanas, Mantrasastra, etc., on the lines of the Western psychological thinking and concepts.

" Upasana learning when compared and contrasted differs significantly from all other learning strategies of West and East put together including APVL ( Peri, 1994)". To quote Peri (1994), though UL is indigenous it is a highly sophisticated super-learning technology, independent of the teacher at times and the content

**ABSTRACT** : Though it is indigenous it can be the best-fit in the rigorous experimentation of the modern scientific psychology. The process of learning by upsana can efficiently be tested with the ultra-modern techniques of physiology, neurology, and psychology.

The entire upasana learning can be simply explained . The learner chants a code word , sentence , or the name of any deity for a definite number of times . In doing so the mental capacities of the individual develop in an abnormal fashion . "At times the UL is teacher-free , and at times content-free (Peri, 1994).

As to the enquiry how it can be subjected to the rigorous experimentation is an enthusiastic query . First let us test whether we can call the



Upsana as learning at all. For this, the answer is affirmative. If we analyse the widely accepted definition of learning as given in the first para of this paper we are left with these components:

- i) Learning means any thing that brings forth a permanent change in personality,
- ii) The change in personality may be in cognitive, affective, or psycho-motor domains,
- iii) The change should be permanent, and
- iv) The change should be caused by practice as in trial and error or insight or a host of such means.

Applying the case of UL, it brings forth a permanent change in personality, and the change may be in one or all domains. Thirdly, the change continues to the end of the life. Finally, the change occurred is by a practice of a special type, but not the trial-and-error. The individual while enhancing the frequency and quality of the code word (mantra) first gets his mind develop and which in turn brings forth a change in the anticipated behavioural line.

Coming to the psychology of the process of UL it is definitely a transfer technology. The mind of the individual completely gets fused with the target behaviour by means of contemplation. No physical trials nor insights are necessary.

The above given hypothetical arguments may be convincing at least to the author himself. How can you sanction the above explanation for approval? Final approval for any philosophical or scientific premises is the experience. We needn't be an archeologist to dig into the history of centuries to approve the experience. Today we find many intellectuals around us. Two cases are appended.

What we researchers can do in this field - is the next posed question. We can design experiments by selecting UL as dependent variable and keeping IQ, creativity etc., as independent variables. Physiological, neurological and psychological correlates can be experimented. Experiments finding significant relation between bio-feed back system can be taken up.

#### REFERENCES:

Bigge, L., Morris. Learning theories for teachers, Harper and Row, 1982.

Hill, W.F., Learning. The third edition, Methuen, 1980.

Peri, S.R., Learning by Aptavakyam. Paninian pub. Visakhapatnam, 1992.

Peri S.R., The Psychology of Aptavakyam learning. A Monograph Paninian pub. Visakhapatnam, 1992.

Peri S.R., Aptavakyam Learning. A strategy of learning M.M.Pattabhirama Sastry Com-



## LEARNING BY UPASANA

27

memoration Vol, R.S.Vidyapeetham, Tirupati, 1993, 330-338

Peri S.R., The Psychology of Aptavakyam Learning. In press. (TRIVENI).

Peri S.R., Beyond Gane's Conditions of Learning. In press.

Sahakian, S. Willian., Introduction to the Psychology of Learning, Rand Mc Nally, Chicago, 1976.

APPENDIX : Mr.X, aged about 40, a friend of the author, just by upasana given by a holyman acquired the power of composing poems thousands and thousands in a shortest time with ease and efficaey. Father of the author, aged 85, the only living authority on Sanskrit today, has acquired the faculty of critical scientific enquiry, unusual memory, spontanety and resourcefulness in scholarly debates by upasana only.□

*(Readers who are interested in this subject can correspond with the author )*

Formal education is important of course but it is primarily a method of opening the way to real education that is acquired when we are alone with a book or a magazine. This becomes even more true when schooling is completed. In these times when science makes new discoveries every day, when communication has the potential ability to put us in touch with all the nations of the earth, when the most distant events often immediately affect our destinies- no one can truly be educated unless his learning continues far beyond the class-room. Our great need of our time is to be mentally flexible.

- ANDRE MAUROIS



## TOWARDS A QUEST FOR SECULAR IDENTITY :

## GRAHAM GREENE

Prof. K. Venkata Reddy

The one English writer who has spanned the decades from the 1920's to the present with a series of works - novels, short stories, travel-ogues, poems, plays, screenplays and essays - that never seem to lose their power or their extraordinary unageing topicality is Graham Greene, an aggressively left - winger, who passed away on 3rd April, 1991. Essentially, he was concerned with what, in Catholic terms, is the idea of the mercy of God. But, we do not need to be Catholics ourselves to respond to his work, for this idea functions, in all that he wrote, as human compassion.

Born on October, 2, 1904, Greene was the son of a former headmaster of a Public School at Berkhamsted, North - West of London. He was educated at this school until he went up to Oxford. In his recent autobiography, *A Sort of Life*, he describes the depressing effect which school life had on him in late adolescence, and how his parents sent him to a psycho - analyst.

Even at Oxford he seems to have been very much aware of the uselessness and the evil of life. He was converted to Roman Catholicism and this has clearly had a deep influence on his thought and writing. His work is marked by a bleakness of atmosphere and a sense of disillusion. To Greene, "there is an icicle at the

heart of the writer. "It was this frigidity that is said to have barred him from receiving the Nobel Prize for literature, endowed for "the most outstanding work of an idealistic tendency."

Travel, the dominant fact of Greene's life, is also the central theme and metaphor of his work. He toured Mexico in 1938 and in 1939 published a reflective travel book, *The Lawless Roads : A Mexican Journey* based on his experiences. *The Power and the Glory*, which appeared in 1940, was the fictional transformation of his encounter with Mexico. Similarly, his journeys to Africa yielded two travel books, *Journey Without Maps* and *In search of a Character*, as well as two novels *The Heart of the Matter* and *A Burnt-out Case*. Travel in Greene, however, is internal as well as external, temporal as well as spatial.

The earliest phase of Greene's career stems from his first novel, *The Man Within* (1929) extending to *Brighton Rock* (1938), the first major novel. During this decade, Greene produced, among other writings, five "novels" and two "entertainments". These share a cast of characters whose internal chaos is produced and mirrored by their environments - smugglers, strikers and political assassins, "cousins of the mor-



## TOWARDS A QUEST FOR SECULAR IDENTITY : GRAHAM GREENE

29

ally ambiguous beings. " In all these early stories, Greene's rhetoric manoeuvres the reader into a questioning of conventional notions of good and evil and into a sympathetic understanding of the failure and the criminal.

The second period of Greene's career is marked by the introduction of an explicitly religious dimension into the world created in the novels of the 1930's. The importance of religion in the novels of 1940's like *The Power and the Glory* (1940) and *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) is that it gives the characters a deeper and a more tragic awareness of the human condition. The individuality of Greene's Catholic characters lies in their divided natures. They are torn between the religious belief and the human demands of existence. The whisky priest in *The Power and the Glory*, though he has betrayed his priestly office, appears to be redeemed by his pity for human suffering. Similarly Scobie, the hero of *The Heart of the Matter* is split between divine decree and human compassion.

During the third phase of Greene's career, there are changes of direction, or at least of emphasis. His fictive universe becomes comic rather than tragic. *The End of the Affair* (1951), which consists of two accounts of an apparent miracle, one by a believer and another by a non-believer, marks the transition to Greene's later work which is vastly different. The move from tragedy to comedy is paralleled by a concentration on secular themes. In the "Catholic" novels, the central conflict is between human and divine wills, and tragedy emerges from their ir-

reconcilability. The later novels adopt different criteria for the definition of identity. Greene the theologian, is superseded by Greene, the psychologist, and the quest for identity with God becomes a quest for secular identity.

This explains the intensification of Greene's use of the picaresque 'bildungsroman' form and his increased interest in novels. Fowler in *Quiet American* (1955) Brown in *The Comedians* (1966) and Plarr in *The Honorary Consul* (1973) are rootless, faithless men existing in the familiar strife torn environments - Vietnam, a lepercolony and Duvalier's corrupt Haiti. These characters are committed to no religious faith. They are hollowmen, unable to find, or even to seek, something with which to fill the void left by the disappearance of God. They undergo a process by which they are shaken into curiosity and, sometimes, into commitment, often through confrontation with a character - Alden Pyle in *The Quiet American*, Messrs. Smith and Jones in *The Comedians* and Aunt Augusta in *Travels with my Aunt* - who epitomises all that is good and bad in such commitment.

Though there is no obvious continuity in Greene's work in the sense of characters moving from one novel to the next, it does have a thematic unity. What Greene wrote of one of his acknowledged masters, Henry James, that "the symmetry of his thought lends the whole body of his work the importance of a system," is just as applicable to his own work, for it too has a uniformity of vision. The consistency of Greene's fictive world is partly rooted in the recurrence of



certain themes, symbols and settings. The lingering influence of childhood, pity for human suffering, " the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God ", seediness and failure, loyalty and betrayal

and, above all, a quest for secular identity- these are some of the elements which render Graham Greene's writings so instantly recognisable that W.H. Auden could confidently coin the term, " grahamgreenish". □

### RIGHT TO SILENT TEARS ( A Poem)

A star dived down from the welkin  
 And loved a lily of the valley  
 They sighed to each other out of fear  
 And held hands. As the hour drew near,  
 Summon'ed by the Moon, the task mistress,  
 The star exited, leaving the friend in distress;  
 Oh, ye that wonder at the star's elegance  
 and eagerly look for its reemergence  
 Deny not the sad flower its right to silent tears!  
 The old poet has consoling words:  
 "Sad heaart, cease repining  
 Behind the clouds the sun is shining,  
 Thy fate is the common fate of all  
 Into each life some main must fall ?"

-ANONYMOUS



## THROUGH THE EYE OF AN ARTIST

Kasturi Bhaskara Rao

Great Art is something to be appreciated not only in the moments of solitude and concentration, but also in our flying minutes of buisness as we go about our daily lives. Art should be a thing of not only Art but also of Life.

An Artist reveals himself gracefully, combining aesthetic insight with a spiritual fervour. His dreams, hopes and aspirations of life in the process of self-analysis based on some hard truths only depict deeper truths on canvas.

Painting is a creative impulse transmitted from one human mind to another. It is an isolated activity where one places oneself above the masses. Completely unattached by hard reality, the Artist tries to view the world in a detached manner pumping in the metaphysical in good measure. This process of self-analysis is based on some hard truths. Canvas depicts the deeper truth.

The making of the image was more important than the idea of the image itself. One has to impart a great deal of discipline in painting to develop a good body of work.

Every Artist is a part of a process of expanding and contracting of establishing well delineated forms and their dispersal between evident planning and clarity. This affair of life and death is as much a mystery as the urge to draw

and paint a mystery that makes itself felt only when the Artist has accomplished a painting which is beyond his known abilities. The creative spirit has been the same for centuries and will be the same for ages, only a deep rooted aesthetic sense is essential for anyone both to produce and appreciate art.

Artists might have nothing to say through paintings.... He need not make a statement but what he wants to express, strive to say in the minimum forms and colours. He has to say and the manner in which he expresses his thoughts so soulfully and so sublimely is most important. Too much of versatility can sometimes blunt the edge of true evolution of technique in any one medium. Self immersion in a broad but legitimately limited sphere of activity has been known to be conducive to development and progress. One should watch how the intelligent young contemporary painter is going to extricate himself from the mesh of confusion.

Art is both a mirror and a window. Even the rigid discipline could bring insight rather than indulgence. Some Artists have produced works to meditate on, to concentrate with the awareness of a world other than the one the Artist creates in his pictures is a sign of maturity in an Artist. He portrays his own world and the only things he knows or the only things he can ever know. He portrays with great fidelity and high compe-



tence, at a time when Artists attempt to make their creations real to themselves and convincing to others in terms of the two worlds, that of modern and that of traditional.

The Artist is the "Seer" who apprehends Beauty everywhere establishing contact with Reality ( Sathyam Ritam) expressing it through integration of forms and sense. This is the "Sadhana" towards ultimate Bliss-the sense of perfection something well done, a feeling of higher sacrifice and divine "Ananda"-- Artist transforms the ordinary into rich visual experiences. Dimensions of life make the universe seen by him. One has to work out his ego problems, adjusting to his different temperaments, before one could start out any creative aspect.

" The two most engaging powers of an Artist are to make new things familiar and familiar things new . " thus Samuel Johnson remarked about the talents of Artists . Creativity is a form of behaviour much of which comes from the "unconscious " . Many personality traits expressed in creativity are inherited and one cannot simply fake them - the will power , energy , determination and emotional strength . Paintings are visible expressions of behaviour . They reveal emotions , integrity , basic temperament , social attitudes etc .

Man moulds art , art moulds man - both physically and psychically . The influence of art over man has been flowing from time immemorial in all times . The greatest use of life is to dedicate it for something that will outlast life itself !

Creating is to bring something new into being , it may be a discovery or a piece of art . Creativity should be rewarded . Fantasy should not be discouraged .

The most important asset of any artist is the confidence reposed in him by the people . He is one among them - he needs only recognition . Love of Man and love of Freedom , a deep commitment to the welfare of humanity and respect for its aspirations - this should be the spirit of an Artist who weaves into texture of his creations . His subjects should be deeply rooted to the soil and courageous to attempt to change the world through his message .

Perception and creation are both complementary and not contradictory to each other . Sometimes an Artist has to address himself to bigger challenges and in the process has to look for unconventional ways of expression . Art is the finest aspect of culture , culture is the finest aspect of human life , hence art is the finest aspect of human life !

An Artist can make us aware of a whole range of new things . But new things do not merely mean new forms of expression . Most modern Art or modern Poetry , fiction is bogged down with the craze for novelty of expression . But some seem to be so impoverished and empty inwardly . There are people who have extended the boundaries of our experience through the undaunted pursuit of their dreams . The best way to repay the debt is by doing the best in our own way , in our own line .



## THROUGH THE EYE OF AN ARTIST

33

Philosopher, saint and statesman Dr.S. Radhakrishnan once defined the creative life- " Let us live in the world of time, have the perspective of the eternal, discipline ourselves so that every act we do, we do it as a dedication to the Eternal----- And all our activities are to be utilised for the purpose of producing a better life, a creative life in which every man will have more amplitude of existence, more richness of being, more fervour of friendship."

Art by its universality spreads the message of cooperation and understanding of a common world and shared interest of the people. Truly beautiful creations come when right perception is at work. If these moments are rare in life, they are also rare in art. March of science and ethos of modern civilisation inevitably influence contemporary forms of art. Nature in its pristine form has been a source of mystic inspiration for art. Philosophy and religion have also provided materials for artistic representation. □

## CONTRIBUTORS ! PLEASE NOTE!

Contributors who send articles for publication, are requested to make them as brief as possible, at any rate not exceeding 4 foolscap size sheets type-written on one side on double space. They should send two copies. Faintly printed xerox copies will make reading difficult. An undertaking may accompany the article to add that the article does not involve copy-right infringement.

Authors who send their books for review may kindly note that they should send two copies. One of them will go to the reviewer and one will remain with the Editor. They should also note the name of the place or person from whom copies can be had.

I.V. Chalapati Rao.

Editor,

HIG II B4\F10 Bagh Lingampally,

Hyderabad-500 044



## CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL (A Prose Poem )

R.Suryanarayana Murthy

Oh ! what bewildering discoveries , and what explosion of knowledge ,  
 Like cloudbursts giving new vistas of light with each downpour ;  
 The secrets of the Atom laid bare ,  
 Travel into space bringing stellar regions nearer home  
 The Computer know-how helping to solve the most complex riddles  
 The power to recreate life no longer confined to the womb of secrecy :  
 Is man on the way to become a Super being ?  
 Is earth getting turned into a paradise ?  
 Alas ! The brutal reality gives a picture of abysmal delusion  
 Man is still as far away from being human as he was before ,  
 His bigotry and terrorism and the ethnic cleansing he practises  
 Are no whit less appalling than the medieval horrors of human delivery ;  
 With Aids , Scud missiles , Nerve Gas and Acid Rain added to his grand armoury for  
 self- destruction  
 And ghettos continuing to be what they have been through centuries  
 Shelters of misery and Squalor for the millions  
 Is man anywhere near to his dreamland, the millennium ?  
 Or is he getting tuned to sing the song of death with one big bang ?  
 Alas civilization is on trial and the planet is in the red as never before  
 And no mantra can save man from the impending doom  
 Till he learns to subsist with Nature in harmony sublime  
 The sweep and majesty of its forms becoming a source of joy and strength  
 And allows true religious spirit engross his mind. □

Ideals are like stars. You will not succeed in touching them  
 with your hands . But like the sea-faring mariners on the desert of waters you choose  
 them as your guides , and following them you reach your destination . '

-CARL SCHURZ



## ALL FOR ME ?

Ms. B. Sivasankari

As Balaji returned home from school, the clock struck 4.30. Granny was busy gossiping with the lady next door. On seeing him she shouted, "Why are you late? O.K. Go wash your dusty hands and feet, take the dosais on the kitchen table and start studying...." As if her job was over, she resumed her conversation with the neighbour from where she had left.

Irritated with Granny's indifference, Balaji kicked his shoes out, tore his socks off his feet and threw the school bag along with them, into the verandah. Red with rage, he deliberately walked into the kitchen with his dirty feet and pushed a piece of dosai into his mouth. The dry dosai got stuck in his throat and he couldn't eat any more. Hunger infuriated him further and leaving the plate on the floor, he came out shouting, "Paattiiii, dosai is hopeless. It is hard like a cardboard. How am I to eat it with dry sugar?"

Furious at being interrupted in her interesting conversation, Granny turned round and shouted louder.

"What! Did you ask how you are to eat it? With your mouth of course! Do I have to teach you even that? Look at this nine-year-old boy's cheek! Dosai is hopeless, I believe! How will dosai prepared be at two in the noon now! How can you expect it to be crisp and steaming hot! Do you expect me to prepare them once for you when you are back from school,

then for that great Queen, your mother, when she returns from office and then for your father? I can't be preparing dosais umpteen times to please each one. Take it or leave it! Whatever it is....."

When granny started shouting like this, Balaji knew she would never stop. He made his way to backyard by the left side of the house, to escape her scalding tongue. He sat down on the edge of the cement tank there. The place felt hot because of the exposure to the scorching sun all through the day. The heat surged through the shorts to his thighs. A crow sitting on the thorny hedge squinted at him as it cawed its greeting with its grating tone. Balaji bent down to pick up a pebble and aimed it at the crow. Although his aim misfired the crow sat there unperturbed by the passing pebble.

He felt ravenously hungry but the dosais were most unpalatable. Invariably they had dosais, idlis or upma for tea. There was never a change in the menu in this god-forsaken house. In other houses there is such rich variety-poori-potatoes, chapati-kurma, bhajias, idiappam and so many many different items! The very thought of the dishes made his mouth water!

Even today as he returned home with his friends, they stopped at the doorstep of Ganesh's because he was in the thick of a heated discus-



sion on cricket. On hearing his voice his mother rushed out immediately and said, "What are you doing Ganesh? I have made your favourite potato bondas. Come and have them hot, my son!" How she melted with affection! One must be born under extremely lucky stars for such good fortune.

They need not have variety in his house as in Ganesh's. Couldn't they at least provide some good side-dish to go with the idlis and dosais-say a chutney or a sambar? No hopes! Never, never do they give him even this basic fare!

If granny is no good at cooking, can't mummy at least come home early and cook something tasty for him? But where is the chance? She reaches home only by 7 P. M. and there's time just to get the cooker on for hot rice. As for the rest of the dinner they just warm the "left overs" of the morning and use them. When this has become a habit how can he ever hope for any variety!

'Mummy doesn't love me at all,' thought Balaji. If she did, wouldn't she come home earlier? Perhaps what granny says often is true. Blades of grass peeped out of the crack in the tank. He plucked one angrily out of its roots.

His fury rose higher as he remembered the insult and injury he had suffered a few days ago over insignificant groundnut balls. That day his friend had brought them from home; his mother's preparation of course. He gave Balaji half a ball. It was so sweet and delicious that he wished they

could be made for him at home. Then he could have not just half but even ten or as many as he liked, to his heart's content. Foolishly hoping for the impossible, he approached granny with his request.

"What! Nut balls, eh? You want ME to make them, do you? You expect ME to buy the groundnuts, shell them, peel them, make jaggery syrup. . . . Oh ma! how can I do all that work by myself? What wonderful requests you do make! Isn't it enough that your mother makes me work like a slave? Do you also have to add to the burden? Am I a servant for all of you? I break my back slogging over your regular meals and you just stuff yourselves to your full and start picking holes! Why don't you ask your DEAR MOTHER? But where will she find time for all this? She spends all her time in dressing and make-up, going to the office, flirting with her colleagues, going gallivanting, and chooses to return home late in the night! Thu! Why don't you ask HER for nutballs and cane rolls?!"

As granny says, mummy does seem to have time only for gallivanting. How well she pretends when she asks, "Had your dinner dear boy? Did you drink your milk? Only if you do, your body will be strong and healthy!" All this is sheer hypocrisy! Milk eh! Who wants this horrid milk! As if milk is the greatest thing in the world!

And look at this dad! Can't he pull her up and insist that she look after me properly? But again where has HE got the time for all that? Half the time he returns home only after I have



## ALL FOR ME ?

37

gone to sleep. Even when he does return by 9 p.m. he listens to granny's complaints against mummy. Then he'll be out with his usual questions : "Balaji, did you do your tests well ? Have you completed your home-work? Shall I help you with it ? You must concentrate fully on your studies. Get that" He would help me with the home-work and then go to sleep.

These people never ask me whether I played happily with my friends. Nor are they worried about what I had during meals. But they never ever forget to ask me about my studies. They just don't care for me ! They are not willing to satisfy my little little wishes and demands ! Then why should I alone bother to study hard just to satisfy them ?

"No ! I will not study hereafter. I will not accept dry dosais. Let me see how they react. What CAN they do after all " Balaji sat up with pride and arrogance. He decided not to go in until someone took the trouble to come there and ask him in.

A black sparrow with a lengthy tail came and sat on the neem branch. Two squirrels ran squeaking. With their tails up. Balaji could feel the shadow of a person near him. He turned round. It was the uncle who was visiting the family in the rear flat.

"Hullo"

"....."

" Won't you speak, my boy ? Why are you seated here ? Isn't your name Balaji ?"

The boy still kept quiet . The gentleman pulled him up gently to make him stand straight. Balaji stood up unwillingly. Somehow he felt rather ashamed to face that uncle. The previous day, when he shouted at his mother for not polishing his dirty shoes, uncle had been watching him, standing by the Tulsi plant.

" Why aren't you talking Balaji ?"

" What am I to talk ?"

Uncle smiled kindly.

" O.K. You needn't talk if you don't want to . Do you like chocolate eclairs ? Shall I give you some ?"

The thought of chocolates sent in a whiff of joy through him but he found it rather embarrassing to ask the gentleman . Uncle seemed to have sensed his embarrassment . He smiled , pulled out four eclairs from his pocket and offered them to Balaji . The boy shyly took one , peeled off the wrapper and pushed the sweet in to his mouth .

"Thanks ."

"You're welcome . Which class are you in ?"

" Fourth ."



"I see. Which school is it?"

"Sacred Heart Convent."

"Very Good. That's an excellent school. It is very difficult to get a seat there. Your parents must have been through a lot of trouble to get it. Right?"

Balaji wanted to say, 'Trouble, my foot!'. But he simply curled his lips in contempt.

"Do any of your classmates live in our street? Why don't you go and play with them?"

"Oh no! All the children here study only in the little thatched school at the end of the road. I am the only one studying in the convent."

Uncle stroked the boy's dishevelled hair.

"It is getting dark. Shall we go inside?"

"You go if you want to. I am not coming."

Balaji turned round in a huff and sat up on the edge of the tank again. Uncle's lips spread slightly in amusement at the boy's fury. He joined the child at the tank edge. "Like another chocolate?"

"Thanks." The child having got over his shyness, took one and popped it in to his mouth.

"There was a very delicious smell of crisp roasting dosais from your house. Did you have them?"

Balaji brought a grotesque frown to his face.

"Who ever will eat that kind of stuff!"

"So it was for the dosais that you bawled at your granny in the evening, was it?"

Balaji bent down his head and examined his nails.

"I'd like to talk to you, Balaji, just for a little while. I've been waiting just for this chance. Will you give me a hearing? Even if you don't like it why don't you listen to me, just for five minutes? Please..."

Balaji felt like shouting, 'Nothing doing' and running in to the house. But he remembered the chocolates. And the affectionate tone of uncle kept him back.

'Listen Balaji, both your parents go out to work and granny is alone at home then, isn't she? She is also very old and weak and therefore cooks whatever she is able to. If granny does not prepare the dosais, you will have to go hungry till your mother returns, won't you? Have you ever thought of that?"

"Why should I go hungry? If mummy returns early from the office, I ask you, why SHOULD I go hungry?"



## ALL FOR ME ?

39

" She can't come back early , my boy , because her job is such . . . " As if it is such a big job . . . . Do you know what granny says daily ? "

only by 9 p . m . "

" . . . . . "

"Tell me . "

" Granny says . ' She is not even a graduate . She has just completed school . Her six hundred rupees are a pittance for this family . " Uncle smiled . He ran his fingers through the child's hair fondly .

I'll tell you . Your father's a clerk in a small firm . Do you know that he is doing extra work as a typist in a lawyer's office from 6 p . m . ? It is only because he has taken up two jobs that he comes home late . "

" Let them take up ten more jobs if they want . What do I care ? But nobody seems to bother about me in the least "

"It is quite true that she is not highly qualified . But instead of wasting her time in idle talk like others , she is trying to earn whatever she can , isn ' t she ? You must remember that . Do you think a receptionist 's job is easy ? Whatever the agonising problems in her heart , she must receive every visitor with a pleasing smile . She must answer the endless phone calls amiably and at times she has even to take charge as typist . We are at Saidapet and her office is far away in Royapuram . Do you know that ? She has to change two buses to reach her office . By the time she gets the two connections to reach home , it is 7 p . m . How terribly tired she must be feeling when she returns ! You MUST THINK of that , Balaji . "

" Why not ! My dear child , both your parents slog so hard only for your sake , for you , their only darling child . Do they buy anything for themselves with this hard - earned money ? Did you notice the number of holes in your father's slippers ? Instead of buying himself a new pair for fifty rupees he gets you a pair of shoes for ninety rupees . Remember you told me a while ago that all the children in this street study in the little thatched school at the end of the road ? Why have they admitted you alone in that famous convent school ? "

Balaji blinked , unable to reply uncle .

As if I don't know all this ! I AM NOT asking her to go to work , am I ? Does my friend Ganesh's mother go to work ? Why can't mummy also stay at home like her ? "

" Your parents wish to give you a good education and raise your social status in the future . They are not highly educated themselves . But they are putting forth their best , working as hard as they possibly can , to run the family . In their position , sending you to a convent school is itself a heavy burden . But do you know how they take it ? They say , It is because we have

" Quite possible of course . Leave that for the present . Tell me why your father returns home



not had proper EDUCATION, we are unable to prosper in life. Our son Balaji at least should get good education and come up in life. ' Even yesterday your father repeated this to me on his way back home from work. They are striving very hard to give you something that they could not get in life. When compared with the bright future that awaits you, are the late arrivals and dry snacks so very important, Balaji ? ".

When uncle spoke firmly but calmly, Balaji felt as if somebody had suddenly lit a lamp in his heart. His head went down on its own and somehow he felt very sad and inclined to weep aloud. " You may wonder whether granny is ignorant of these problems. She is not ignorant but conservative. As she belongs to the old school of thought she is not able to accept the idea of women going out to work for remuneration. She expresses her impotent rage by shouting. That's all. Moreover, since you go to school and your mother goes to work, granny feels lonely. Perhaps this loneliness and boredom make her shout so much. Whatever the reason, you must not take her so seriously. When your mother returns home exhausted, granny scolds her out of irritation. If you add to it by losing your temper over little things

like dry dosais, won't your mother feel hurt ?

I need not tell you all this because you know it already. You are indeed an extraordinarily brilliant chap ! But you see I was getting a little bored and I thought I might as well spend some time with you. I am leaving tomorrow morning. Will you come home if you come to Bangalore? Shall I give you my address?"

Uncle stood up with a smile as if nothing had happened. Patting Balaji affectionately on the shoulder he turned homewards. Balaji sat there silently for two whole minutes.

However he tried he couldn't control the tears running down his cheeks. He felt like eating the dry dosais, washing his face and finishing his home work quietly before mummy arrived.

' Thanks a lot, uncle ' he said softly to the uncle who could not have heard him at that distance. As he stood up to get inside home, there was a fresh enthusiasm and vigour in his gait. □

**Translated from Tamil by**

**S. Sulochana Rengachari**



## CHALLENGE TO FATE : A PERSPECTIVE

### ON DARUWALLA'S "FIRE - HYMN "

V.L.V.N NARENDRA KUMAR

Some natural sorrow , loss or pain That has been , and may be again ? - Wordsworth,  
" The Solitary Reaper " .

Among the Parsee poets who made signal contribution to the growth of Indian English verse , Keki Daruwalla stands out like a colossus . He is truly " one of the most substantial of modern Indian English poets " as Prof . Naik points out .<sup>1</sup> In Daruwalla's case , poetry becomes the vantage point from where he views the Indian scene with absolute objectivity . At certain points of experience , the Indian landscape sears his eye and becomes an inseparable part of his consciousness . If Ezekiel is a ' natural outsider ' whose circumstances and decisions relate him to India , Daruwalla is an alien - insider whose ethos is always in harmony with the milieu . For him , " poetry is first personal - exploratory , at times therapeutic and an aid in coming to terms with one's interior world " .<sup>2</sup> Sometimes a dominant image is fused to the structure of the poem and is indistinguishable from it . " Fire - Hymn " is a shining illustration of this mode .

The poem commences with a cognitive image which expands and undergoes symbolic elaboration . This gives the poet more leeway . The opening lines describe the perception of an infant :

The burning ghat erupted phosphorescence  
and wandering ghost - lights frightened passers-  
by as noonlight scuttled among the bones

Daruwalla starts with a direct reference to the fire and moves outward to create a complex of responses and meanings . The movement in the poem is centrifugal as the poet starts at the centre . Fire , an element of nature , is to Daruwalla what West Wind is to Shelley . It performs the function of an objective correlative . The infantile experience depicted in the poem is significant as it gives the poet an insight into the ultimate reality, Death . The tone of his father in this context is ironical and irreverent :

You see those half-burnt fingers  
and bone-stubs ? The fire at times forgets its dead:

This remark is typical of a fire-worshipper . The " half-cooked limbs " which bear witness to the ' fire's debauchery ' sicken the poet . He, his ' child-fingers clenched into a little knot of pain ' swears to ' save fire from the sin of forgetfulness ' . In this connection, it would not be out of place to remember Prof. Walsh's words : " Violence, framed and controlled, is the theme of several of Daruwalla's best poems whether it be natural violence or human violence..... " .<sup>3</sup>

However, he fails to perform his vow . Twenty years later, he consigns the body of his first-born to the flames . This act becomes inevi-



table as the nearest *Dokhma* ( Tower of silence) is a thousand miles away . The fire - hymn then makes a provocative proclamation :

*You stand forgiven .*

He is broken but rebellious and swears again :  
I swore this time to save it from the sin of forgiving .

The concluding lines of the poem are reflective of his intense desire to go to the *Dokhma* after death . His agony can be felt only when the situation portrayed in the poem is looked at from an anthropological perspective .

Parsees still stick to the ancient method of disposal of dead bodies . There is explicit prohibition against cremation or burial underground because defilement of fire or earth ( and waste of precious earth in constructing tombs ) is a sin . Fire is the most ethereal and subtle principle . It is said that he who brings impurities to the fire , the same recoils on him .<sup>4</sup> The method of disposal of dead bodies by the Parsees is the speediest . It is free whereas others systems are costly . One of the salient features of this system is equality , Death is truly a leveller in this method . It is the most hygienic system according to Zoroastrianism , and death is regarded as an inevitable phenomenon of Nature . However , it is not primitive . Speaking of the excellence of the system , Dasturji Khurshed S . Dabu observes : " A Parsi's last act on earth is this donation of his dead body to hungry birds , that are Nature's appointed scavengers . The useless physical vesture , being now mere decaying flesh serves to

feed other creatures , as a charitable contribution " .<sup>5</sup> Fire is pure , no doubt , but when some impure decomposed matter is burnt on it , the resulting effects are impure .

According to Zoroastrianism , fire is an emblem of the Divine . It stands for *Ahura Mazda* , the Light and the Truth . Says Khorshed Adi Sethna : It represents purity because physically fire burns up any filth flung into it but itself remains pure and unaffected .<sup>6</sup> Majority among the Parsee community believe that they have no right over bodies which belong to nature and therefore the vultures have a right to them . Hence, it is a grievous sin to cremate a dead body .

Commenting on Daruwalla's sensitivity , Parthasarathy observes : " Like Ezekiel , Daruwalla is intensely aware of his environment . He tries to restore order in the chaos he finds around him with the healing touch of irony " .<sup>7</sup> The tone in " Fire - Hymn " is bitter but not as ironic as in the following lines :

Throw him to the birds and he will surrender flesh like an ascetic . ( " Ruminations " )

The confrontation commences when his invincible spirit clashes with the inexorable fate . His perception as a child is critical , almost on the brink of scepticism . It is accompanied him by the death of his first born . The cremation of the child chastens . The shadow of nostalgia falls on the poet and grows and he beigns to doubt his own integrity as a Zoroastrian . Yet , he endures and his determination to go to *Dokhma* after death strengthens and it eventually becomes



## CHALLENGE TO FATE : A PERSPECTIVE ON DARUWALLA'S "FIRE - HYMN" 43

a redeeming principle.

Speaking of Daruwalla's poetry, Prof. Bruce King observes : " Yet for all its involvement with Indian life it seems to be written from the outside rather than, like Shiv . K. Kumar's, from the inside . Daruwalla's poetry seems private, personal " .<sup>8</sup> However, " Fire - Hymn " is not merely an expression of the poet's inmost wish ; it voices the aspiration of a " diminishing community " .

### References :

1. M . K . Naik , History of Indian English Literature, Sahitya Akademi, 1982, P. 205
2. As quoted by Prof. Srinivas Iyengar , Indian Writing in English, Sterling, 1984, P. 142
- 3 . William Walsh , Indian literature in English Longman , 1990 , P. 142 .
4. Yasna , XXXVI 1
- 5 . Dasturji Khurshed . S . Dabu , Message of Zarathustra, New Book Co . Ltd . , P. 102 .
- 6 . Khurshed Adi Sethna , Madame Bhikaji Rustom Cama : Builders of Modern India Series, Publications Division , 1987 , P . 25.
- 7 . R. Parthasarathy , Ten Twentieth Century Indian poets, O . U . P . , 1981 , P . 6 .
- 8 . Bruce King , Modern Indian Poetry in English, O . U . P . , 1989 , P . 126. □



## SHAJI'S DEPARTURE FROM AHAMENDNAGAR

Ms . B . Indira Kumari

First Shaji looked at those joyful places  
Where , while yet a child going on all his fours  
Leaving the mother's lap , some soft touch of exhilaration  
He , ah , unknowingly used to experience within ;

Then slowly he gazed at the play grounds  
Which enjoyed every time the sweet company of his  
And his playmates who forgot their ownelves  
While immersed in the very joyful games ;

Then his looks turned towards those Royal streets  
Which seemed to feel very proud of themselves  
When he with his newly wedded wife mounted  
On the royal elephant went in a procession grand ;

Lastly his eyes dwelt awhile on the royal court  
Where in the presence of all royal authorities great  
Honoured was he as the Commander - in - Chief  
Thus looking at all these he stood forgetting a while his ownself ;

Then Warm tears from the source of memories  
Both painful and sweet gushed into his eyes ,  
Slowly touched the ends of eye lashes  
And lastly they flowed down the cheeks ;

Then Shaji controlling himself with great effort  
With quivering lips spoke thus within his heart ,  
" Thee I leave with mine heart most paining O 'Mother Dear  
Let me bid thee my last good bye O ' Mother Mine ever " .

*( A poem translated from " Siva Bharatam " )*



## SHAKESPEARE - SELF - PORTRAYED

- Mrs. Y. SATYASREE

" How beauteous is mankind

O brave new World " !

Shakespeare

Did Shakespeare write his plays " purposely " , as Bridges thought or " instinctively " as Keats said ? This is one of the fascinating questions in literature to which it is difficult to find a cut - and - dried answer . It is like the philosophical doubt whether the seed or the tree was created first. It is like the controversy in the realm of psychology regarding the relative importance of heredity and environment in shaping the personality of the child. The answer that readily springs to our lips is Sir Roger's judgement : Much can be said on both sides.

Sidney Lee refused to believe that the personality of Shakespeare could be deduced from his works and so falling back on external evidence and odds and ends of recorded biography, he concluded that Shakespeare was a fine specimen of the Industrious Boy who got on. And Sidney Lee's " Life of William Shakespeare " was regarded as the official biography till recently. This opinion prevailed until Edmund Dowden wrote 'Shakespeare - his Mind and Art'- to establish his favourite theory that Shakespeare's plays show the development of his personality in its

successive stages and reflect his private emotional life to a great extent. It was on the basis of this theory that Dowden proceeded to classify Shakespeare's plays under four categories to show how he achieved his philosophical heights after passing through the early days of immaturity, apprenticeship, inexperience and depths of suffering and sorrow. These are his (1) Early comedies (2) Later comedies and Historical plays (3) Tragedies and (4) Tragi-comedies. It is not possible for a writer in flesh and blood to remain completely aloof from the characters he creates and to express his opinion on men and matters with hundred percent detachment and judicial impassivity. It is just possible that a dramatist transposes into his characters and situations, consciously or unconsciously, certain things which he finds in himself. This happens despite the critical cannons like ' we must get away from what we desire to judge' and ' one describes summer best on a winter day'. The theory of strict impersonality is attacked by eminent writers like Goethe who gives expression to his firm conviction that a writer who describes the ocean must have seen atleast a small pond ! The poet who wrote about



the mountain must have seen atleast a hillock !

Plays which are full of vitality like those of Shakespeare could not have been written in cold-blood, by any author whose mind was not as sensitive as a seismograph in recording the slightest tremors in the contemporary situation. According to Raleigh, 'no dramatist can create live characters save by bequeathing the best of himself to the children of his art, scattering among them a largess of his own qualities, giving to one his wit, to another his simplicity and constancy that he finds deep in his own character'. There can be no thrill of feeling and excitement on the printed page unless they have been experienced by the writer himself. It is only those books into which the writer's personality has projected that remain alive in the reader's mind and escape oblivion.

It is no wonder, therefore, that some critics said that Shakespeare had identified himself with this or that of his characters, either with Henry V or Hamlet. It is undeniable that Falstaff, Shylock, Cleopatra and Prospero shone in certain situations with a lustre not always their own. We hear Shakespeare's opinions uttered in unmistakable terms in Brutus's prophetic forecast over Casar's corpse, Ulysses's praise of order, and Coriolanus's hatred of the 'greasy' mob.

These constitute revealing side-lights on the fibre of his feelings and the general complexion of his sympathies, his mental attitude at different stages of his career and his over-all outlook on life. There may be a few oblique references in

his plays to the contemporary political and religious situation as revealed in his frequent attacks on puritanism and prudery.

'Hamlet' is the most popular of his plays because it is supposed to be nearest to Shakespeare himself and the tragedy contains a substantial measure of self-portrayal. The play shows much of a temporary spirit of disillusion and embittered feeling. Brandes, the great critic, said that Shakespeare even placed in Hamlet's mouth invective which is more appropriate to a subject than to a sovereign. So there was every temptation for venturesome critics to attribute such a sense of desolation to a gloomy period in Shakespeare's life, when his father died in 1601, his friend Essex was condemned to death (Cawdor's execution in 'Macbeth') and his patron Southampton was imprisoned. With so much grief gnawing at his heart, Shakespeare naturally presented time as 'out of joint'.

Hamlet's discourse to the players has been universally interpreted as Shakespeare's commentary on the failings of the acting profession. It strikes a strong personal note. T.S. Eliot affirmed an identity between Hamlet and his creator by saying 'Hamlet is dominated by an emotion, inexpressible because it is in excess of the facts as they appear', Hamlet's puzzlement at the absence of objective equivalent to his feelings is a prolongation of the puzzlement of his creator in the face of his artistic problem.

Robertson, another critic of no mean repute said that Hamlet's mental disorder was a



## SHAKESPEARE - SELF - PORTRAYED

47

legacy of which Shakespeare made liberal use to let out a little of his own pent-up distemper. The psycho-analyst Dr. Ernest Jones declared that Hamlet suffered from "Oedipus complex" because Shakespeare did also. A strain of sex-  
nausea runs through all his plays written after 1600. The dark-eyed lady of the Sonnets keeps on popping up like King Charles's head. The strain should be associated as Dover Wilson suggested, with jealousy "the green-eyed monster". "Othello", "Hamlet", "King Lear" and "Macbeth" are timeless tragedies where intense passion, emotional fervour, frantic imagination and hectic madness cast their spell on the reader. These at longlast resolve themselves into an enveloping peace and serenity when we come to read his tragi-comedies. The twilight plays "Winter's Tale", "Cymbeline" and "The Tempest" end in conciliation, forgiveness and philosophic resignation.

"How beauteous is mankind, O brave new world!" seems to be the keynote of Shakespeare's personality. It is a triumph of optimism. Critics find a close identity between Prospero of 'The Tempest' and his creator, especially in Prospero's abjuration of magic after achieving his meaningful miracles. They interpret it as Shakespeare's fare-well to the stage. He too had wrought wonders through the alchemy of his art and had for his guiding principles, forgiveness and reconciliation. Dowden emphasised the parallel between Prospero and his maker in more than one personality-trait. The redoubtable Bradley too lent his support to this theory. Harris went to the length of associ-

ating Shakespeare with Jaques, Henry the Duke in "Measure for Measure" Hamlet and Prospero in the evolution of his character.

The fact that Shakespeare did not seek to impart teaching or to propound a philosophy is a sure compliment to his catholicity. Philosophy was no doubt "Adversity's Sweet Milk", but it was of no use to Romeo if it could not restore Juliet to him. Commonsense and worldly wisdom were more important to Shakespeare than any philosophical doctrines. "There are more things in heaven and earth than philosophy dreams of".

Unlike George Bernard Shaw, Shakespeare never stepped into the role of the propagandist. "There is no moral lesson to be learnt in Shakespeare except accidentally". There was no poetic justice in his tragedies in the sense that reward and punishment were mathematically distributed among the characters according to their merit or demerit. Evil was punished often but good was not always rewarded.

"Measure for Measure" is the only play in which there is direct treatment of the moral problem. But here Shakespeare's answer is negation of morality. "Against the dark back-ground of sin-ridden Vienna rises the snow-white figure of Isabella preaching the gospel of chastity. The picture makes a good enough Christmas card but it is not Shakespeare". He never approved such dry asceticism, such cloistered and fugitive virtue. He could say: "There is a soul of goodness even in things evil". Despite difficulties and every adverse circumstance, the poet remained



'an optimist with his unshaken faith in the ultimate vindication of God's ways.

Shakespeare held the balance even " between men of imaginative power like Richard II, Brutus and Hamlet and men of practical ability like Hotspur, Octavius Caesar and Faulcanbridge ". It is nature divided against itself by inexhaustible sympathy with opposite sides. Forgetting that he was myriad-minded and many-splendoured, some critics try to label him with partisanship . In his book " Marxist Interpretation of Shakespeare

" . Alexander Smyrnov introduced the fascinating thesis that Shakespeare was opposed to the ownership of private property ! Where Shakespeare is concerned one should avoid this kind of sectarian and partisan approach . After all reductions and deductions , the fact remains that he was a supreme observer , a superb artist and a universal poet , but in experience , habits and attitude to life , a pretty normal Elizabethan man . The stuff of his plays is the same common Elizabethan humanity , ' transmuted but not effaced by his art' . □

' I have obtained knowledge which won the admiration of emperors .  
I have procured many things coveted by man here on earth .  
But what next ? What next ?,'

- Adi Sankara .

' Alas ! I have mastered Philosophy , Law and Medicine ,  
And over deep Divinity have pored  
Studying with ardent and laborious Zeal !  
And here I am atlast a very fool  
With useless learning curst  
No wiser than at first  
Thou bearest thy hearing risk has but a journey,'

- GOETHE'S " FAUST " .

' If thou art rich thou art poor  
For like an ass whose back with ingots bows  
And Death unloads thee '

William Shakespeare .



## IN DEFENCE OF R. K. NARAYAN

B. VYAGHRESWARUDU

R. K. Narayan is one of the foremost Indian writers of fiction in English. He is one of the engaging short story writers of our time. Many rare distinctions were conferred upon him.. He was conferred an honorary membership of the American Academy and Institution of Arts and Letters.

Narayan has a scholar's pen, a poet's imagination and the perfect eye of the journalist. " When we consider Narayan's novels as a totality, we are faced with the problem of locating the precise area of his creative genius ".<sup>1</sup> As K.R. Srinivas Iyengar puts it- " Quotation is difficult because the perfume is nowhere concentrated but fills the entire atmosphere " <sup>2</sup>. Thus it is very difficult to pin-point the important qualities that brought a universal acclaim to Narayan's works.

Narayan presents a wide range of characters in his novels and short stories. There are no " good " and " bad " characters in his novels and short stories. He presents human nature 'veraciously and interestingly and memorably, and there is no overt condemnation or praise..... each new novel is a jerk of the kaleidoscope when an engaging pattern emerges to hold our attention ".<sup>3</sup>

" The widespread and universal appeal of R.K.Narayan is due to the predominant middle class milieu in all his novels ".<sup>4</sup> The hero of

Narayan's short stories and novels 'the modern unknown warrior', is the middle class common man. Unlike Mulkraj Anand and Manohar Mulgaonkar, Narayan is not interested in politics and sensationalism as themes of his novels or short stories. He is not interested in local or national political themes. In his interview to the Indian Express ( March 28, 1961- A peep into R. K. Narayan's Mind ) he said : ' when art is used as a vehicle for political propaganda , the mood of comedy , the sensitivity of atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors , the crisis in the individual soul and its resolution and above all the detached observation which constitutes the stuff of fiction is forced into the back - ground '.

R.K.Narayan is content to snap life's ironies , knots of satiric circumstances and tragicomedies of mischance and misdirection . "Narayan's is the art of resolved limitations and conscientious exploration : he is content like Jane Austen , with his little bit of ivory , just so many inches wide . . . . . " <sup>5</sup>.

What Malgudi to R. K. Narayan is Wessex to Thomas Hardy . Just as Wessex in Hardy's novels is the microcosm of the declining English agriculture community , Malgudi represents an Indian small town and stands at a nicely calculated distance between the East and the West . With each novel Narayan develops Malgudi town . In ' Swami and friends , ' it is a small town and urbanised in ' the Vendor of



sweets'. The familiar details of the early Malgudi are never neglected in the later works but absorbed in the story. " Such familiar land - marks enhance the universal appeal of Narayan's novels as they provide a sense of continuity " <sup>6</sup> Graham Greene , a renowned novelist , in his preface to R.K. Narayan's ' Swami and friends ' has lucidly praised Narayan for the vital picture of life that he has created of Malgudi and its inhabitants .

R.K. Narayan becomes what Raja Rao calls a true ' Upasaka ' in having a strong desire to communicate and in achieving a mastery over the language to communicate effectively and forcefully . " Unless the author becomes an ' Upasaka ' and enjoys himself in himself ( which is Rasa ) the eternality of the sound ( Sabda ) will not manifest itself and so you cannot communicate either and the word is nothing but a cacophony " <sup>7</sup> . Narayan's skilful use of language suits to his themes and techniques . As Iyengar puts it " he wields so difficult and ' alien ' a language like English with masterful ease , and conveys the subtlest shades of feeling and thought " <sup>8</sup> . His thinking process is synchronised with the language he uses . He uses pure and limpid English , devoid of any suggestive epithets and intricate metaphors , easy and natural in its run and tone . " His ultimate success is the clever blend of Indian words interspersed with the regular narrative without creating any jarring effect. " <sup>9</sup>

Narayan shows a strong affinity to typically Indian tradition of story telling . But he adopts his form and style from the West . He steers clear of a message or doctrine to his read-

ers . " He is an analyst of individual feelings , emotions and action in an exploration of hidden human conflicts . Nowhere in his novels does he preach or pontificate " <sup>10</sup>

His success lies in individualising his characters . " His strength of characterization lies rather in his thorough and close observation of life's little incidents , a healthy sense of humour . . . . . and more than in his ability to bring a character to life with a few deft strokes of pen " <sup>11</sup> . He gently pushes the readers right into the midst of life that he is presenting .

R.K. Narayan is an expert in making use of different techniques in unfolding the story . At times , he dramatizes the events and uses dialogue with an amazing effectiveness . As it is said earlier , it is difficult to locate the precise area of his creative genius . We like him for his excellent plots , captivating characterization , lyrical language , sharp irony , wit and humour , rare techniques in unfolding the mysteries of human nature in his novels and stories .

There are some critics who find fault with Narayan for the ' ending ' of his stories in an unconvincing way . Just like O ' Henry , he ends some of his stories with a ' sudden reversal of situation . ' In his collection of short stories ' A Horse and two Goats ' , Narayan left his oft-beaten track i . e , the brilliant tradition of his better known stories . For some , some of these stories are inexcusably lengthy and discursive . They feel that Narayan has lost his grip over the successful narrative technique he employed in his earlier stories . Variety is the spice of life and it is



## IN DEFENCE OF R. K. NARAYAN

51

not good to find fault with a great writer for not being monotonous in his themes and techniques. Even in these stories, we find a rare and different kind of technique which bewitches the readers and keeps them spell-bound. Just like 'Generation Gap', 'communication gap' gives much scope to an imaginative writer to spin a beautiful story out of it. This communication gap depends on various factors and exists on different levels. This 'gap' may be a result of the difference in the linguistic, physical, intellectual or spiritual levels of the characters involved. R. K. Narayan a great fiction writer and expert story teller makes use of this technique (let us call it so!) in some of his novels and short stories with an amazing success. This collection of short stories 'A Horse and Two Goats' stands as a proof to R. K. Narayan's craftsmanship in exploring this technique to the maximum possible limits. In addition to this novel narrative technique, his luring lyrical language, which has remained as witty, as humorous and fresh as ever holds our attention.

Just like each season has its own beauty and glory, each stage in the creative life of a great writer has its own beauty and glory. Here we can conclude with John Keats memorable lines.

"Where are the songs of spring? Ah,  
where are they? Think not of them thou hast thy  
music too", .  
(To Autumn)

## NOTES

Essay on Indian Writing in English - Silver Jubilee Student Edition, Macmillan 1977; P. P. 307.

2. K. R. Srinivas Iyengar, 'Indian Writing in English' (1985 Ed.), Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, p. p. 338.

3. Ibid p. p. 364.

4. Novy Kapadia - Middle class Milieu in R. K. Narayan's Novels. Commonwealth Fiction Ed. R. K. Dhawan, Classical Publishing company, New Delhi, Vol. 1, p. p. 146 - 147

5. K. R. Srinivas Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, (1985 Ed) p. p. 360.

6. Novy Kapadia, Middle class Milieu in R. K. Narayan's novels p. p. 150.

7. Raja Rao 'The Writer and the Word', the literary criticism Vol. VIII, No. 1, Winter. 1965.

8. K. R. Srinivas Iyengar.. Indian Writing in English, (1985 Ed) p. p. 384.

9. Novy Kapadia, Middle class Milieu in R. K. Narayan's novels p. p. 158.

10. C. Paul Verghese 'Problems of the Indian Creative Writer in English - Somaiya Publishing Ltd. Bombay, 1971, p. p. 139.

11. C. Venugopal, The Indian Short Story in English (A Survey) Prakash Book Depot,

Bareilly, p. p. 85.



## BAHUBALI, THE COLOSSUS. \*

M.G.Narasimha Murthy

On the sunlit summit of Indragiri \*  
Stands the colossus Bahubali .  
Gliding clouds caress the curls  
On the majestic forehead  
Of the towering ascetic prince ,  
Standing still in meditation.

Strong , serene , unperturbed ,  
The warrior - saint rises  
Above the endless strife  
Of the desperate world  
Of selfish , struggling crowds  
Steeped in violent hatred  
And boundless greed .

The mighty prince of matchless valour ,  
Conqueror of Bharatha , the elder brother ,  
Overwhelmed with remorse and grief ,  
Renouncing the golden crown  
And the fleeting glory  
Of the ephermal world  
Stands at the pinnacle  
Of the spiritual realm .

The awe - inspiring Bahubali ,  
Trasformed now as Gommateswara ,  
A benign , benevolent saint ,  
Perennial source of solace and strength ,  
Proclaims love and forbearance -  
A splendid beacon to all mankind .

\* **BAHUBALI** - a 57 feet tall statue of the great Jain saint Gommateswara ( Carved in 981 AD . ), one of the wonders of the world .

\* **INDRAGIRI** - a 450 feet high hill in Shravanabelagola, Hassan district of Karnataka



## PATTERNS IN THE MOSAIC : EVELYN WAUGH'S FICTION

Dr. D.S. KESAVA RAO

Evelyn Waugh has at once been acclaimed as an accomplished writer of a remarkable stature and also labelled as a frivolous entertainer. These two attitudes typify the two extremes of critical responses to Waugh's fiction. His work has invited a good deal of scholarly discussion and even controversy. Waugh is of special interest to students of modern fiction in view of the varied critical reception he has received which continues even today. His novels cover an impressive time span of over half a century. Critical insights and props spanning more than four decades and the intrinsic worth of Waugh's fiction justify a close look at this intricate mosaic.

Evelyn Waugh is a prolific writer whose output includes fourteen novels, beginning with *Decline and Fall* in 1928 and ending as late as in 1961 with *Unconditional Surrender*, besides some stories, a number of travelogues, journals, numerous diaries, notes, and letters. It is the object of the present study to confine itself to his novels. Sufficiently complex, urbane and polished, his novels make fascinating reading. They represent various levels of artistry, *A Handful of Dust* being hailed as a minor classic and *Brideshead Revisited* generally regarded his masterpiece. Waugh exhibited a remarkable talent for satire, wit, and humour and in a sudden shift to the 'serious' proves almost equally, if not entirely, adroit. His fiction is usually classified into two phases. In his early phase, Waugh

ruthlessly laid threadbare the follies of the British society of his times; accordingly, the early novels sparkle with a rare freshness, savagely amusing satire and flashes of wit. *Decline and fall*, *Vile Bodies*, *Black Mischief*, *Scoop*, *A Handful of Dust* and *Put out more Flags*, by common consent, fall into this early phase. The later works testify to a more balanced outlook on life with religion playing a predominant role; *Brideshead Revisited*, *The Loved One*, *Helena*, the War trilogy consisting of *Men at Arms*, *Officers and Gentlemen* and *Unconditional Surrender*, and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* belong to this category.

The sheer variety of Waugh's subject matter and the rather dramatic departure from his early, and undoubtedly more popular, manner has occasioned varied estimates of his work. While some critics maintain that Waugh's achievement is unique and that he belongs in the great tradition of the English novel, others contend that his works lack consistency, a hallmark of all truly great artists, and that he is a mere "entertainer". This, then, leads us to the crucial question of Waugh's place among the literary figures of England. He has been admitted to be a better artist than Huxley and Ronald Firbank, with both of whom he has some affinities, but he cannot, at the same time, be bracketed with such accomplished writers like Joyce, Forester and Lawrence. A consummate artist, Waugh has cre-



ated fiction of lasting merit. Satirist, moralist, dandy, entertainer, social chronicler, religious novelist, an incurable romantic idealizing a lost past, staunch supporter of the aristocracy - these are some of the labels that are usually associated with Waugh. Of these, perhaps the most damaging is "entertainer" which amounts to a stigma. Those who relegate his early works to the background as 'minor' and devote exclusive attention to *Brideshead Revisited* and the war trilogy are no less guilty than those who regard the early satires as his most mature work and dismiss the later novels as too didactic, sentimental and artistically inferior. Is Waugh, then, adept only at mirroring the absurdities of the late Twenties and Thirties in a comic vein? Does not his work offer anything of lasting value? There are the questions that crop up inevitably during an evaluation of Waugh and the answers to these key questions reflect the critics' own powers of perception and analysis.

It may not be out of place to discuss here briefly the social, moral and spiritual condition of England which the novels of Waugh depict with such power and clarity. The writers of the Twenties and Thirties transmuted into art their own view of the modern English society, both in fiction and poetry. T.S. Eliot in his *The Waste Land* gave quintessential expression to the disgust and disillusionment with a decayed society which he shared with a host of other writers. Such prominent writers of fiction like Joyce, Forester, Lawrence, and Virginia Woolf expressed their radical dissatisfaction with society and in the process turned the English novels into "the most

sensitive artistic register of contemporary experience." A close reading of Waugh's fiction reveals an intense and prevailing sense of futility and sterility in the political life of the nation, in the institution of the family, in the relation between sexes and in the spiritual condition of his characters. The brilliant early satires of Waugh for all their polished, hard exterior, underline the chaos, anarchy and the corrosive ennui of the modern times. In the words of G.S. Fraser, Waugh's novels are among those works "written superficially in terms of comedy or even farce, but with an underlying very disturbing note of bitterness which emphasised the ruthlessness, the nerviness, the unhappiness, the lack of purpose and the lack of love in much contemporary British life."<sup>2</sup>

Not only does a cursory reading of Waugh's novels suggest a quest for permanence, which Waugh believes only religion can offer, but a good number of his characters are directly involved in a quest for the meaning and purpose of life. Paul Pennyfeather in *Decline and Fall*, Adam in *Vile Bodies* and Tony Last in *A Handful of Dust*, to mention only a few of Waugh's protagonists, undertake journeys, both literal and metaphorical, but till the end remain unenlightened. It is interesting that they have only a vague notion of their objectives which is in tune with their dehumanized and spiritually impoverished state. This is not to say that Waugh's protagonists never succeed in their search, but, as Jeffrey Heath aptly observes, "It is not until *Brideshead Revisited* and the novels that follow it that Waugh's personae begin to find their purposes in life. Their discoveries parallel



## PATTERNS IN THE MOSAIC : EVELYN WAUGH'S FICTION

55

Waugh's own realisation that he had been a failure as a man of action and reflect his decision to devote himself to the more withdrawn calling of the Christian artist. Like Waugh, Charles Ryder rejects the army and secular art in favour of representing "man in relation to God". After a long and uneventful life, Helena learns that the one deed which she and no one else can perform is the discovery of the cross. And the saga of Guycrouchback depicts his retreat from the romantic role of crusader into the more modest calling of pious pater-families. "3 He regards Waugh's fiction as "----- a quest for sanctuary and "unique achievement" manifested in a see-saw contest between art and action. "4

Evelyn Waugh's comic inventiveness and his innate satirical genius combine to invest his novels with a unique charm. And yet it is generally agreed that no writer, however great, can fashion his style without in some way borrowing, consciously or otherwise, the matter and manner of either his contemporaries or predecessors. The same is true of Evelyn Waugh's fiction in the sense that one discerns the influence of T.S. Eliot to a remarkable extent.

In his critical study of Huxley's novels, Jerome Meckier says : "The influence of T.S. Eliot's poetry on the satiric novels of the 1920s and the 1930s has never been sufficiently stressed. In Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* (1934), the title of which comes from *The Waste Land*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and in *Antic Hay* (1923), past and present are ludicrously contrasted and characters are

dwarfed by roles their ancestors played with ease. "5 The other major influences on Waugh are Graham Greene, Aldous Huxley, Ronald Firbank, and Dickens. Huxley's despairing comedies of the twenties resemble Waugh's own in many ways, but especially is this affinity more obvious in their choice of themes. His *Those Barren Leaves*, in its effective parodies of Dickensian situation, is reminiscent of Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* and in countless ways *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* anticipates *The Loved one* (1948) of Waugh. However, Waugh carefully avoids the Menippean satire, that is to say, an emphasis on an ironic attitude, which pervades the works of both Huxley and Wyndham Lewis. Graham Greene has long been associated with Evelyn Waugh, the similarity being obvious. Both have attempted to revive the Catholic novel with, of course, varying degrees of success. Both believed that suffering is preferable to pleasure and that badness rather than goodness brings one closer to God. Further, both concur that religious beliefs must be trumpeted. If Greene is better than Waugh at embodying grit and violence, Waugh has excelled at animating and consoling the world.

Some mention must be made of his techniques. Here one encounters a major challenge which has perplexed Waugh's admirers and detractors alike. Being a perfectionist, Waugh lavished great care on the structure of his works. And it is a tribute to his structural skill that no where is this elaborate effort revealed. Waugh is rated as one of the best craftsmen with an uncanny sense of tone and phrase. " Waugh's early



novels are surreal, fantasticated, and ostensibly amoral, but on the figurative level they are parables about freedom, servitude, and vocation. "Waugh began on the classical lines with detachment and objectivity. To convey the chaos and decay of the modern world and the collapse of civilisation, which form his central themes., Waugh makes use of the elements of farce, burlesque, fantasy, satire, irony and caricature. Like Greene, Waugh, too, is influenced by the filmic techniques. The absurd and the outrageous and presented literally. As David Lodge observes: "One might say that the technique of Waugh's early novels is metonymic in an experimental way like Virginia Woolf's "Jacob's Room", but applying the methods she used to the purposes of comedy. Waugh deletes from and rearranges the contiguous elements of his subject to introduce absurd and ironic incongruities- Agatha Runcible coming down to breakfast at No. 10. Downing street dressed in a Hawaiian grass skirt, for instance; or Basil Seal unwittingly eating his girlfriend Prudence at a cannibal feast; or Tony Last reading Dickens aloud at gun-point in the depths of the South American jungle. But the imaginative idea which lies behind and unifies the narrative is often quasi-metaphorical in a way that reminds us of modernist writing. The title *Decline and Fall* hints at an analogy between modern Western society and the late Roman Empire. *Black Mischief* (1932), *A Handful of dust* (1935) and *Scoop* (1938) all turn upon ironic parallels between civilisation and barbarism - the social jungle of London compared with the real jungle of South America or tropical Africa. Ironic comparisons and cross-references between these different milieus are ac-

companied by a cinematic technique of cross-cutting between short scenes often occurring simultaneously in different places - like Greene and Isherwood, Waugh was deeply influenced by the cinema. "7

Evelyn Waugh's counterpoint technique is largely modelled on that of Ronald Firbank who made an important contribution to the structure of the novel. In his perceptive study of the satiric elements in Waugh's fiction, James Carens observes; "Firbank's objectivity and detachment, the counterpoint or montage technique which was his essential mode of presentation, the subtlety of his dialogue, which proceeds through understatement, suggestive emphasis, and sly innuendo, the inventiveness of his comic devices, provided the young Waugh with a model for an economical, destructive, and nondidactic satire "8. Waugh dispenses with the cause-and-effect relationship which characterises so much of the nineteenth-century fiction. He also reduces narration and description to a bare minimum and develops his novels through a series of vignettes rather than a coherent action. It is left for the reader to piece together, as much as he can, of the meaning of each novel. Waugh does not hesitate, like Aldous Huxley, to employ ingenu satire, an ancient satiric mode, occasionally in his novels.

In his later works, Waugh minimises farce and extravagance in preference to probability and verisimilitude. *Brideshead Revisited* and the war trilogy are conventional in the sense that Waugh here follows the fortunes of a group of interrelated characters, and they are labelled by Carens



## PATTERNS IN THE MOSAIC : EVELYN WAUGH'S FICTION

57

as "a satirical blend of novel and romance". Significantly, Waugh uses a first-person narrator for the first time in *Work suspended* which marks the beginning of his later style. The much-criticised latter style is subjective, allusive and sentimental. It is common critical practice to dismiss the later work as a "failure", and to assert that Waugh's art suffers when he discards his comic mask. However, this has been debated frequently.

Critics have been baffled by Waugh's keen delight in the rogues and dissolutes and the Bright young Things. Is Waugh then a mere chronicler of the Younger Generation? Malcolm Bradbury is of the view that Waugh writes "Social chronicle and fantasy in a spirit of comic delight that absolves him from consistent moral representation. Like Dickens, Waugh seems to work by the scene or the chapter with emphasis on the comic possibilities of each situation." His novels are, in this sense, anti-novels, violating traditional expectations, engaging extensively in mock-heroic or burlesque or parody passages, driven forward by a comic delight. In a more recent analysis, James F. Carens echoes Bradbury's view: "Throughout the first stage of his career. (Waugh) offers only the most fleeting glimpses into a positive and affirmative standard. Not until *Brideshead Revisited* in which his catholicism is revealed for the first time, does a positive force significantly emerge to oppose everything that the novelist rejects. The early novels remain generally negative and destructive, and, consequently, Waugh is criticised for lacking a high moral purpose and writing satire without a moral centre."<sup>10</sup> "argue that Waugh approves of the wild and

irresponsible figures who people his fictional world is to lose sight of his very purpose in writing these novels. Jeffrey Heath, writing in 1982, explains the central contradiction in Waugh's fiction thus: "But to argue that Waugh is "Wholly delighted" at the idiocies he records is to be deaf to a constant undertone of censure, surely the truth is that Waugh disapproves of what delights him and is fascinated by that he deplores. It is this ambivalence which provides the very germ and matrix of his art. Waugh is not outside the satiric tradition of Jonathan Swift; on the contrary, he is firmly within it."<sup>11</sup>

1. David Lodge, "Novelist at crossroads", (London: Routledge and Paul, 1971), p. 25.

2. G.S. Fraser, The Modern writer and His World, (London: Andre Deutche, 1955) p. 99.

3. Jeffrey Heath, Evelyn Waugh, The Picturesque Prison, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), p. 9.

4. Ibid, p. 270.

5. Jerome Meckier, Aldous Huxley, Satire and Structure, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), p. 67.

6. Jeffrey Heath, Evelyn Waugh, The Picturesque Prison, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982) P. 121.

7. David Lodge, The Modes of Modern Writing, (London: Edward Arnold, 1977)



8. James F. Carens, The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh, ( Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 1966 ), p. 10.

9. James F. Carens The satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh, p.x11.

10. James F. Carens, p.7011. Jeffrey Heath, Evelyn Waugh, The Picturesque Prison, p. 58. □

## DEAR POVERTY

Dr.C.JACOB

So soon you have returned to me O,Poverty !  
 You are welcome : gone are my days of prosperity ;  
 I can't disown you and turn you back , old friend :  
 Don't you know poor men's hearts are angelic kind ?

I thought in fact my fate had turned when you left me ;  
 I hardly knew my virtues too would soon quit me :  
 With riches never try me once again , my dear ,  
 For precious more are virtues than much wealth , I fear . □

( We regret omission of this poem in the previous issue. We apologise to the contributor of the poem )

Editor



## FASTING - A LOUD THINKING :

Dr . R . Gangadhara Sastry

In the present day we hear quite often about a fast being undertaken by a private individual or a public figure either for a personal cause or public benefit. Most often it takes a political colouring. Instances of fasting for noble and public causes are not lacking in modern times. One has to stretch one's mind very far to know whether a particular fast undertaken by an individual is firmly, deeply and unquestionably calculated for public benefit. It would be appropriate, particularly in this context, to know what role 'fasting' has been assigned in human history.

'Fasting' has been a universal practice throughout the ages. Although it is difficult to pinpoint a specific rationale or motivation for individual or group fasting, in most cultures there are atleast three motivations easily discernible : (1) preliminary to, or preparatory for, an important event or time in an individual's or people's life ; (2) as an act of penitence or purification ; and (3) as an act of supplication.

In the ancient and the medieval periods the ritual of fasting went through various periods of upheaval. Only with the consolidation of each religious faith, at the beginning of the modern age, both in the Eastern and the Western parts of the world, it could project an acceptable form of its own for various cultural groups to assimilate and practise. Certainly it is the strong belief that 'fasting' would lead to the

initiation or maintenance of contact with divinity or sort of a supranatural or transcendent being that encouraged mankind to keep alive the practice and as well pass it on to the new generations with reinforced faith and confidence, supported by actual experience.

Infact, periods of fast covering a month are prescribed in almost all the religions all over the world. The Hindus observe it on a number of occasions like 'Sivarathri', 'Naagula chavithi', 'Ekadasi' and particularly during the 'Magha', and 'Sravana' months. In a similar manner the Zorastrians and the Christians have their own specifically allotted months for the same purpose. Both Judaic and Hebrew faiths, as well, have set for themselves certain days for fasting. Although formalised fasting was spoken against in the New Testament ( Mt. 6. 16, 6-18 ) ;

6-16: " Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance : for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast " .

6-18 : " That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto their Father which is in secret ; and thy Father, which seeth in secret ; shall reward thee openly " .

It eventually became the favourite ascetic practice of the desert dwellers. Also it is of interest to note that within the Christian tradition



there gradually developed seasonal fasts, such as the Lenten—one of forty days preparatory to Easter ; Rogation Days in spring in supplication for good crops ; and Ember Days, days of prayer and fasting during each of the four seasons of the year.

Invocation of divine grace for material and spiritual benefits, through communion accomplished by fasting has thus been the central objective of mankind all over the world through all ages. It is precisely the reason why holy days like 'Sivarathri', 'Ramzan', 'Lenten', 'Chai', etc., are very sincerely observed by people of different faiths even during present times. Infact, these holy days are singled out in order to impress upon man's mind his duty to impose a 'fast' on the senses and a 'vigil' on his intelligence to keep away polluting impulses and inclinations. Thus, the ritual of fasting is the supreme symbol of the need to restrain the sense from craving for pleasure.

Among the Muslims, fasting is laid down during the Ramadan, in order to make the people practise sense-control and to cleanse the spirit and the passions, so that they may be rendered fit to approach God. In Hindu parlance, fasting is referred to as '*Upavasa*', which means living close to God. It was almost the same concept for even the ancient Egyptians and the Jews. The Christians hold the view that abstinence from food is particularly effective in securing the balance between the body and the spirit.

Though fasting i.e., '*Upavasa*' in a general sense is understood to mean abstinence from

food and drink, for maintaining good health by giving rest to the digestive mechanism—in its ultimate analysis it is a profound concept with very deep and subtle implications. Realisation of this fact is possible once it is understood that fasting entails not merely abstaining from food and drink from Sun-rise to Sun-set, but the mastery of the more difficult discipline of giving up violence, falsehood, anger, envy and the maligning of others (Bhagavan Baba). That is why it is enjoined upon all true Muslims during the Ramadan month to avoid rivalry, hatred, jealousy, anger, lust etc.

However, people belonging to different faiths firmly believe that food is responsible for all kinds of physical and mental impurity in the body system and hence fasting should help one to drain out such impurities and travel faster towards the divine. "Fasting of the heart", (*hsim-chai*), rather than bodily fasting as preached and practised by the later Chinese religious communities, particularly those who professed Taoism, was regarded as more beneficial to arriving at, "the way" (Tao).

In modern times 'fasting', besides being a religious weapon, has been successfully utilised by some rare personalities to accomplish their cherished purpose of benefiting nations and communities at large. In this context, reference may be made to personalities like Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Potti Sri Ramulu and a lot of others, who successfully undertook fasting on a number of occasions with astounding results. In fact, Gandhi considered fasting as a potent weapon in his Sathyagraha armoury. Fasting as a *Sadhana* received its finest form in the hands of Gandhi. He



## FASTING -A LOUD THINKING :

61

once observed that fasting for the sake of personal gain is nothing sort of intimidation and the result of ignorance ( Young India, 30 Sept. 1926). For Gandhi, it is a very powerful moral weapon and can't be undertaken by any one, since it carries a spiritual import. He clearly stated that, "Mere physical capacity to take it is no qualification for it. It is of no use without a living faith in God". (Harijan, March 18, 1939). Again fasting is not meant to be a facelifting operation. As convincingly stated by Gandhi, it should not be a mechanical effort nor a mere imitation by anyone. It must come from the depth of one's soul and hence it is difficult. ( Harijan, March 18, 1939). Thus, it is a discipline acquired through one's purified soul power. One who has not developed this soul power should not, therefore, use this weapon (Harijan, Oct 13, 1940).

Fasting carries a spiritual significance even as an instrument of subduing one against whom it is exercised, as the results aimed at and the intentions inherent in such an exercise are thoroughly examined from all possible sides. Gandhi first undertook a fast for the amelioration of the mill-hands of Ahmedabad who were underpaid and overworked. His intention was, "not so much to raise the wages as to cure the employers of their unwarranted objection to system of arbitration which would promote peace in the textile industry". This fast brought into being a system of arbitration which survives to this day. Every fast undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi was aimed at something glorious for the entire society. His last fast, like his first, was for accomplishing, "a reunion of hearts of all com-

munities" and to regain "India's dwindling prestige and its fast fading sovereignty over the heart of Asia and therethrough the world". (The Hindu, August. 9, 93p.8).

Another example of an individual totally committed to the Gandhian way and Gandhian principles with a firm religious zeal was Potti Sri Ramulu. He was an embodiment of purity, piety, sincerity, honesty, idealism, sacrifice and magnanimity. He observed fasting-not once but three times for accomplishing certain social, economic and religious purposes of very great significance for the country at large. It was in 1946 and it was for 23 days that he observed his first fast for seeking the admission of Harijans into the temple of Venugopalaswamy at Nellore. In 1949, he undertook a fast for 25 days for the eradication of untouchability in the Madras Province. In 1952, he observed his third and last fast for the creation of a separate Andhra State. 'Fasting' has gone through different stages. It has been undertaken for a variety of purposes-social, economic, political-but primarily for religious purposes. It is, however, necessary that we guard ourselves against persons who undertake fasts for narrow, petty, personal and political purposes, and especially those who make it a mockery in modern times(as in the case of relay-fasting), since as observed by Gandhi, "unscientific experimentation with fasting is bound to be a harmful to the one who fasts, and it may even harm the cause espoused". (Harijan, October: 13, 1940). □



## The Indian Political Scene

Mamidipudi Pattabhiram

Elections in six States have just been completed and although the Congress(I) made the grade in Orissa, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, its reverses in Maharashtra and Gujarat have eroded its authority to a considerable extent. What impact it will have in the Lok Sabha elections due next year in May will have to be seen for it will determine the future of the Congress(I) itself apart from that of the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V.Narasimharao. National politics is in for some drastic changes and it would be an extremely difficult task for the Congress (I) to regain its foothold in the States in which it has been humbled. There seems to be an anti-establishment wave whatever party has been in power and this explains to some extent the success of the Congress (I) in Orissa while it was defeated in States including Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka much earlier. There has been lot of speculation about Bihar but there is no doubt that in spite of all the precautionary steps violence has taken a heavy toll. The Chief Election Commissioner's efforts for a fair poll in Bihar must be applauded although some of his actions in this connection were arbitrary. Almost it is the first time that elections were being held to an Assembly after its term expired without the State being under President's rule and this has raised several important constitutional issues.

Meanwhile the Supreme Court's verdict on the status and powers of the two Election Commissioners Mr. G.V.S.Krishnamurthy and

M.S.Gill vis-a-vis the Chief Election Commissioner is awaited but whatever it is it would be relevant in this context to note what the founding fathers of the Constitution had to say on the matter in particular and on the Election Commission of India in general. Dr. Ambedkar who piloted the Constitution Bill in the Constituent Assembly dealt with the subject in all its details. Actually, a Committee which was set up to deal with Fundamental Rights made the suggestion that it should be recognised that the independence of the elections and the avoidance of any interference by the executive in elections should be regarded as a fundamental right and provided for in the chapter dealing with Fundamental Rights. Mr.C.Rajagopalachari, however, maintained that franchise would not ordinarily be a part of fundamental rights. After a great deal of discussion it was resolved that instead of being included in the chapter on Fundamental Rights the provision regarding the setting up an independent Election Commission along with the related proposals should find a place in some other part of the Constitution.

Equally important was the discussion in the Constituent Assembly as to whether it was proper for a Central Election Commission to have jurisdiction over election to the State Assemblies. For instance, H.V.Pataskar moved an amendment restricting the jurisdiction of the Central Election Commission appointed by the President to federal elections. The object of the amendment was



## The Indian Political Scene

to provide that the supervision of State elections should not be vested in the President but should be left to the Governor or some other agency in the States. This view of Pataskar found favour with many members including N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar who agreed that while the actual conduct of elections and the executive machinery that might be required for conducting them would have to be mobilised through the State governments, the superintendence and control should be impartial and be in the hands of an impartial tribunal.

Even the drafting committee of the Constituent Assembly made the recommendation that the Election Commission for supervising the State Elections should be appointed by the respective Governors. However this view underwent a radical change when the Articles came up for discussion in the Assembly. Dr Ambedkar introduced an entirely new Article which made a comprehensive provision for a Central Election Commission to be incharge of all Central and State elections. Although there were protests on the ground that it will impinge on State autonomy and made the Centre all-powerful, Dr. Ambedkar defended it by advancing the plea that the executive government in certain States was instructing and managing things in such a manner that "those people who do not belong to them racially, culturally or linguistically are being excluded from brought on the electoral rolls" and in order to prevent this injustice being done to such persons there was no alternative to departing from the original proposal of having separate Election Commissions in States.

K. M. Munshi even went to the extent of saying that complaints in fact had been received that certain State Governments could not be "trusted" to be as impartial in elections as they should be. This drew loud protest from some members who vigorously complained that the Centre was reducing the States to the position of municipal bodies without initiatives.

On the composition of the Election Commission Dr. Ambedkar recalled that the drafting committee proposed to have permanently "one man called the Chief Election Commissioner" so that the skeleton machinery would always be available. He was obviously referring to a suggestion that was seriously made that an Election Commission could be brought into existence just on the eve of an election and a permanent body was not really called for. Dr. Ambedkar said that elections no doubt took place once in five years but by-elections were going to take place on and often. Further, assemblies might be dissolved before the period of five years and consequently the electoral rolls should have to be kept up to date all the time so that the new elections could be held without any difficulty and promptly. It was, therefore, felt that having regard to these exigencies it would be "sufficient" if there was permanently in session one officer to be called the Chief Election Commissioner while when the elections came up the President might further add to the machinery by appointing other members to the Election Commission.

It is thus amply clear what was envisaged by the Constitution makers was that a multi-mem-



ber Commission could be brought into existence only when the need arose. It would also be interesting to note what Dr. Ambedkar had to say on the conditions of service and the tenure of office of the members of the Election Commission. He said that the Chief Election Commissioner "shall not be liable to be removed" except in the same manner as a judge of the Supreme Court. "If the object of this House is that all matter relating to elections should be outside the control of the executive government of the day, it is absolutely necessary that the new machinery which we are setting up, namely, the Election Commission should be irremovable by the executive by a mere fiat." That was why, he said, the Chief Election Commissioner was given the same status so far as removability was concerned as had been given to the judges of the Supreme Court. "We do not of course propose to give the same status to the other members of the Commission." Dr. Ambedkar added that "we have left the matter to the President as to the circumstances under which he should deem fit to remove any other member of the Election Commission subject to one condition that the Chief Election Commissioner must recommend that the removal is just and proper."

This statement of Dr. Ambedkar did not go unchallenged for Hridayanath Kunzru, for instance, pointed out that it was not proper that the Chief Election Commissioner should have the final say on the removal of the Election Commissioners.

Replying to the criticism, Dr. Ambedkar

said that so far as the question of removal of the Chief Election Commissioner and the election Commissioners was concerned "the provisions which are incorporated are adequate and nothing more is necessary for the purpose." Given this background it is apparent that the founding fathers did not want a position of equality between the Chief Election Commissioner who is a permanent constitutional functionary and the Election Commissioners who are to be appointed as and when they become necessary. But the entire issue became complicated mainly because the present incumbent, Mr. T.N. Seshan, had been on occasions taking decisions which were arbitrary and even ill conceived. The Government, therefore thought it necessary to appoint permanent Election Commissioners so that vital decisions could be taken by a multi-member Commission after close consultation among the members.

First, an ordinance was issued which was later approved by parliament appointing two Commissioners enjoying the same status as that of the Chief Election Commissioner although the CEC will be the chairman when they met for discussions. It was provided that decisions will be on the basis of majority if unanimity could not be reached. Mr. Seshan however felt that the appointment of the Commissioners was motivated by a desire on the part of the Government to clip his wings. When he challenged the validity of their appointment in the Supreme Court, the apex court gave an interim order confirming for the time being the superiority of the Chief Election Commissioner by stating that on mat-



ters coming up before them, the Chief Election Commissioner's views were final. With the result that the two Commissioners have not been functioning at all and for practical purposes the Election Commission has remained a single-member body. The question is whether the Govern-

ment was right in altering the conditions of service by a statutory enactment which seems to go against the intentions of the constitution-makers. It would have been more appropriate if the changes that were brought about were by means of a constitutional amendment. □

[ Note : The matter has been finally settled recently by the Supreme Court that all the Election Commissioners enjoy the same rank . Editor ]

' The Indian academic world is laden with deep somnolence without the justification of deep potations; it is mental vacuum and not vintage port, which produces the abstracted air on the faces of the professors . The inanition , if any , is broken only by discontent '

NIRAD CHOUDHURY

' No form of adult education which ignores the spiritual basis of life , will really meet the needs of the country . Education is primarily the process by which a community preserves its character and transmits its heritage. Both in Ancient India and in Greece it is regarded as an initiation into the values that govern life which enables the initiated one to raise himself over the external conditions of existence . The educated man is freed from the chains of degrading reality and develops a human outlook . True education sounds the note of the universal man , the human as distinct from the national or the racial or the communal . '

-Dr . S . RADHA KRISHNAN



## BOOK REVIEWS

### ENGLISH

**THE FOUR AIDS** : Sri Aurobindo  
(Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. 1991. 38  
pages. Rs. 10)

**ON THE MAHABHARATA** Sri  
Aurobindo (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.  
1991. 187 pages. Rs. 30)

With regard to analysing Sri Aurobindo's writings, the centre is every where, the circumference nowhere. While the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Volumes numbering more than thirty overwhelm us by their spread and intellectual-spiritual aura, you could take a volume at random, open a page and catch a line: the Aurobindonian message will be seen there blazoned in perfect, sculpted, inspiring English.

Among the prose writings that bring us the Aurobindonian philosophy of transformation, *The Synthesis of yoga* has a scriptural place. It is a sumptuous work and exhaustively deals with various kinds of yoga and Sri Aurobindo's own integral yoga. 'The Four Aids' is one of the seventy-nine chapters of the book and tells us that for our endeavour we need *shastra, utsaha, guru* and the appropriate *kala*. When the four aids are propitious, the aspirant advances rapidly. The end must be a transformation of the individual. Else, the aids become purposeless.

"Nor should he (the sadhaka) forget the aim of these external aids which is to awaken his soul to the Divine within him. Nothing has been finally accomplished if that has not been accomplished. It is not sufficient to worship Krishna, Christ or Buddha without, if there is not the revealing and the formation of the Buddha, the Christ or Krishna in ourselves. And all other aids equally have no other purpose; each is a bridge between man's unconverted state and the revelation of the divine within him."

Studied with meditative absorption, *The Four Aids* can do immense good to each one of us on the path to the life divine.

*On the Mahabharata* : seems the epic in its historical setting and probes the significance of Krishna's incarnation and teaching. It is sheer joy to read Sri Aurobindo's punch-laden style when dealing with purblind European scholarship that sought always to argue from European analogies. "a method pregnant of error and delusion". Sri Aurobindo gives serious consideration to Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's sagacious work, *Krishnacharitra* though he will not jettison like Bankim the miraculous elements in Krishna's story.

Many of the essays included here are unfinished. Some are casual notes. But the Aurobindonian touch is present everywhere, be it analysing the genuine peace overtures of



## BOOK REVIEWS

Krishna or the bare, powerful style of Vyasa or the imperialistic designs of the Kshatriya kings of that time.

Then, there are some perfect translations from Vyasa. What a pity Sri Aurobindo could not translate at least a couple of Parvas in full ! The few short passages when read with the Sanskrit original in hand form a grammar of the art of translation. Thus Draupadi in the Virata parva :

" .....as a queen of beasts  
Awakes her sleeping lion in the track less wood  
or a she elephant her mate, pressed Bheema  
All to her bosom. Then as a sweet-voiced lyre  
Exultantly to music swooning, grasps  
Gandhara's strain, with such a cry the pale  
Panchalian called her lord, Arise, arise,  
Why dost thou sleep, O Bheem, like one dead !  
Not other than dead is he whose wife the wrath  
That touched, yet lives . "

Genius illumines the pages of *On the Mahabharata*, a volume that inspires and makes us proud of being heirs to the great Indian culture.

Prema Nandakumar

**THE PSYCHIC BEING** (Selections from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother ) Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry,  
price : Rs.40

In Sri Aurobindo's parlour, the word psyche means the soul, the essence of the soul, the spark of the Divine which is there in all things. The term psychic means-psychic being (some times) the psychic essence. Psychic being means the soul " when the psyche, a spark of the Divine which is present in all life and matter, begins to develop an individuality in the course of evolution, that psychic individuality is called the psychic being.

In this compilation divided into six sections, all what a student should know about the nature, role, function and action, growth and development, sadhana, of the psychic being, and the after life and rebirth, is presented in brief in simple English, mostly in question and answer form. Hence the book is highly useful to the newly initiated into the Aurobindo cult. Is an emotion always a vital movement ? Has the psychic any power ? Is there a spiritual being in every body ? Is the psychic being in the heart ? What remains after death in the heart ? What remains after death and reincarnation are, but a few of the questions answered here.

" If knowledge is the wider power of the consciousness and the function as to free and illumine, yet love is the deepest and most intense and its privilege is to be the key to the most profound and secret recesses of the Divine Mystery " There are always two ways of doing the Yoga-one by the action of the vigilant mind and vital being, the other way is that of the psychic being, the consciousness opening to the Divine " The physical heart is in the left side, but the heart centre



of Yoga is in the middle of the chest-the cardiac centre. The apex of the psychic and emotional centre, is the backbone, the base in front of the sternum". This work abounds such statements as the sex that reveal the experiences of a great Yogi. Extracts from "Savitri" preface every section. Glossary of some important words also is included.

" KASYAPA "

### TELUGU

1. Swaapnikudu \_\_\_ Aadarsavaadi :  
Plato-Jeevitam, Taatvikata--pp-88-price  
Rs. 13=00

2. Vijnaanakhani : Aristotle- -  
Jeevitam, Taatvikata--pp 104-price Rs. 14=00

Both books written by " Sri Virinchi " and published by Jayanti publications, Karl Marx Road, Vijayawada-- 520 002.

The Indus Valley Civilisation, and the civilisations of ancient Greece, Egypt and Persia are thousands of years old. Even though details of Indus Valley Civilisation are not yet fully known, except through the excavations at Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa and through later discovery of sites in Gujarat, archaeologists and historians are still continuing their efforts to study in Indus Valley scripts. The history of ancient Greece and ancient Egypt and Persia is safe and available to the world.

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle belonged to the ancient Greece. There were a large number of city states, and Athens was the most prominent among them. Athens was the gateway for entry to many of the city states. Sparta was another prominent city state. Wars were waged among the city states and when there was external aggression, some of the city states joined together to fight the outsiders, as with the Persians. When the wars were over the different city states lived peacefully, developing trade, commerce, art, literature and other liberal arts. The historians determined the period 469-399 B.C. as the life-time of Socrates. He was a great philosopher, and a number of young persons gathered round him to hear his catechisms and grow wiser. Though Socrates did not write any books, Plato, and Aristotle, among some others, collected his great ideas and left his writings to the posterity. Socrates was accused of misguiding the youth of Athens and Greece, with his talks and needless questioning. After a trial, he was incarcerated for 30 days, and during that period his friends prepared a plan for him to escape from prison, which he refused to do saying that he will not violate the laws of the state. Then he was tried again and the sentence was passed that he should drink hemlock, and die. His friends were meeting him freely in the prison all these days. He spent his last day with his friends and in the evening he drank hemlock. Plato wrote " Such was the end of our friend, whom I may truly call the wisest and justest and best of all the men whom I have known ".

Plato, 427-347 Bc, was a contemporary of Socrates, while Aristotle, 384-322 B.C., was



## BOOK REVIEWS

69

a disciple of Plato. Both Plato and Aristotle were active citizens and worked sincerely for evolving a just society and guiding the affairs of the state on ideal lines. They had to pass through both easy and difficult times during their lives. "The Republic" and "The Laws" are among the great works of Plato. Aristotle wrote a number of important books, among which "Ethics" and "Politics" are the more prominent. Besides, Plato is reputed to have brought out "The Discourses of Socrates", which is in a way the explanation and exposition of the ideas and statements of Socrates. Aristotle was the teacher of Alexander the Great.

"Sri Virinchi" made a bold attempt to introduce Plato and Aristotle to the Telugu reading public. As can be seen, the two books are not in great detail to study the two giants, but are adequate to get an introduction to them. As one reads the two books one gets to know how the two great social and political thinkers desired the state and the rulers (statesmen?) should be; a discerning person does not fail to notice the failings of the present-day rulers of states. Also, in the first chapter in the book on Plato, the author referred to some of the thoughts of Socrates, which appear to be very close to the ideas contained in the ancient Indian (Hindu) scriptures.

Some of the Telugu expressions used in the two books need to be explained in greater detail in order to help the reader to understand their significance fully and with reference to their context. This short-coming could have been overcome had the author supplied a glossary of

specific terms.

It can be hoped that in the second edition, these short-comings will be removed.

**Dr.B.P.RAO.**

### TAMIL

**YATHUM OORAY** : By Siddharthan  
(Pann Mozhi Pathippagam, Madras - 600047  
; Rs. 35 / -).

This historical novel pertains to the period of reign of the Chola King Peru Narkilli (two generations after the famed ruler Karikal Peruvalathan) i. e. the last Tamil Sangam days or around the 2nd century A.D.

In a sense, Time (with a capital-T) is the major theme treated in this work. Divided into five parts named after the five distinct geographical regions found in the Tamil country of those days (*Kurinji, Mullai, Marudam, Neithal* and *Paalai*), it describes the journey, by foot, of a family of folk artistes from the Chera land, having as its destination Poompuhaar where river Kaveri merges with the ocean.

The novel is not merely a description of the love tales of two girls (dancers) of the family--one of whom commits suicide after being seduced and raped by her 'lover' and the latter's accomplice--and the fruition of the efforts of the Chola king to perform the Rajasuya sacrifice and



indirectly making the other kings and chieftains in the Tamil country accept the Chola's over lordship ( of course, after a war with the Chera king Maantharanchel Irumborai ). It has quite a few other strong points. The author discusses the prevalence of certain evil practices in the Tamil society in those ancient days ( no doubt co-existing with many good ones ) : for example, prostitution-- and the girls from artistes' families being lured into it--and the chastity concept prescribed for 'family' women as a virtue, the real motive being the protection of one's own property rights. The reader is also told about the unholy alliance between scions of royal families and of traders who play with the lives of unsuspecting maidens. Yaazhini, a member of the itinerant artiste's family ( and niece of its head ) trusts Ilankumaran, a wealthy trader's son and is seduced and raped by him and his accomplice belonging to the royal family.

Siddharthan discusses the flora and fauna found in different regions of the Tamil country , and gives a very detailed treatment of the various dance forms ( e .g . *Valli Kooththu* , *Kudai Kooththu Kapaala Kooththu* ) in honour of different gods like Kartikeya , Vishnu and Shiva -- accompanied by players on different musical instruments of the period in the *Naallolukkam*

( *darbar* ) of the various chieftains and kings . He describes the influence exercised in the lives of kings , and in the conduct of state affairs , by the priestly class among the Hindus , as also by Jains and Buddhists . That the folk artistes were familiar with ideas and subjects not pertaining to their own profession , is highlighted by the author through the dialogues the head of the artistes' family has with different individuals : Kings , other artistes and musicians , apart from Kaarvannan, the lover of his daughter Pann Mozhi ( and the confidante of the Chola king ). The discussions centre round topics such as religion , evolution of life , life after death , reincarnation etc . , apart from poetry , different forms of dance and music ( including ancient Tamil equivalents of present day *ragas* and *swaras* and *lyrics* . ) .

Incidentally , a relation of Kaarvannan is described as using tobacco along with betel & leaf and lime . Was tobacco being grown , or imported into , the Tamil country in the 2nd century A .D . ?

Siddharthan's work is a valuable addition to historical novels in Tamil . His style is racy . The book deserves to be read at one go . □

V. Subramanian



## BOOK REVIEWS

71

TELUGU

Name of the book : PADYA SILPAM  
( in Telugu )

( A Sixty year's Literary Heritage )

Author: Dr. Nanduri Rama Krishnamachari

Price : Rs 80      No . of . Pages : 93

It is a book of literary criticism written by Dr. Nanduri Rama Krishnamachari who is a well - known scholar and poet and was formerly Chairman of the Official Language Commission of Andhra Pradesh Government . The main focus of the book is on the structural beauty and symmetry of Telugu metrical verse . It is a timely publication when we have a spate of books on prose poetry , unmetered verse, songs etc and very few books worth the name on metrical verse . As Prof. Ganti Somayaji said in ' Contemporary Indian Literature ( Published by the Sahitya Akademi , New Delhi - 1955 ) Dr Krishnamacharyulu is a neo - classicist . "The neo-classists like Dr. Nanduri Krishnamacharyulu, Jandhyala Papayya Sastry and G . Joshua are questioning the value of the surrealism of the years from 1935 to 1960 . Harmony instead of strife , is their ideal . In the post - war world an equilibrium is to be achieved between matter and spirit, between idealism and realism . The neo - classicists are anxious to regain for poetry its dignity as the symbol of all that is beautiful and true .

The declared aim of the book which is dedicated to Sri Y . S . P Reddy is to bring to the

notice of the Telugu readers the existence of a long literary tradition - priceless heritage - of a thousand years and to impress on them the need not only to protect but also to enrich it . In furtherance of this laudable object the author has cited examples with quotations from verses selected for structural elegance and symmetrical beauty .

The subject is analytically presented with examples under the following headings :

- 1 . Telugu Padya Silpa Saushtavam
- 2 . Padya Kavita - Samaajika Spruha
- 3 . Satyam , Sivam , Sundaram
- 4 . Andhra Nataka Rangam

There is an interesting discussion of literary matters and poetic requirements like social awareness , the place of meter , the importance of feeling and emotion , Pun , the happy blending of sound , sense and the art of Avadhana . In support of his views , the author has quoted liberally from literary critics of English Literature . Splendid samples of poetical excellence are furnished from timeless classics , like Pothana's Bhagavatham , Alasani Peddana's 'Manu Charitra' , Srinatha's 'Naishadham' etc . A few verses are mentioned from popular stage plays like ' Gayopakhyanam ' , ' Chintamani ' , ' Paduka Pattabishekami ' , ' Satya Harischandra ' etc .

The author's pragmatic advice to the budding poets is that their literary production should



be a happy blend of the old and the new .

' Seerla Mekhala ' a poem written by Dr . Krishnamacharya deals with an interesting incident demonstrating the intimate friendship between Duryodhana and Karna . No doubt , it provides proof of their " sacred friendship " . But

its authenticity is doubtful .

All things considered , PADYA SILPAM is an excellent book of literary criticism which should be read by all . I am confident that it will find a place on the shelves of college and public libraries .

I . V . Chalapati Rao . □

' Literature has accepted for several generations ' a romantic separation or estrangement from the common world . This estrangement , though it has produced some masterpieces , has by now enfeebled literature " .

- Saul Bellow's ' HERJOG '

True freedom comes through commitment commitment to people , to ideas , to causes greater than oneself . Freedom lies in being able to choose an area of engagement and intense interest . It cannot be found in aimless hedonism or irresponsible drift . The joys of freedom reside in using one's talents and powers to the full in the service of some worthy enterprise that commands one's conviction and devotion .

--JOHN LOGAN



## 'THE FOREIGNER': AN EXISTENTIAL DILEMMA

J. VENKATESWARA RAO

Arun Joshi has emerged as an important Indo-English novelist with the publication of his first novel, *The Foreigner*.<sup>1</sup> In an enthusiastic review, Kale Morsch refers to *The Foreigner* as "one of the finest novels to come out of India" and goes on to compliment the author for presenting from within, a view that is "tumultuously open and never boring." However, she recognises the competence of the novelist in realising the theme as the novel is "ruthless, compassionate, shocking and sometimes downright brutal."<sup>2</sup> Murali Das Melwani believes that the novel examines the effects of alienation on sensitive Indians of mixed heritage, as the protagonist in *The Foreigner* is an alien everywhere since he shares three cultures.<sup>3</sup>

In *The Foreigner*, the story is told in a series of flashbacks with a clever ordering of past events to maximise suspense. Though the narrative includes Babu, an Indian student in America, June, a simple and passionate American girl, Mr. Khemka, a Delhi industrialist, the novel is in the main the story of Sindi Oberoi - a rootless young man. The story is narrated from Sindi's point of view. The division of the novel orders the events, as the first part lights up the beginning of relationships, the second growth and decay, and the last, defeat and destruction.

Joshi exhibits the agony of loneliness in uncovering the psychological conflict in the char-

acter of Sindi Oberoi in his quest for meaning through a series of relationships. Impressed by the authenticity and insightful peering into agonised psyche, Meenakshi Mukherjee comments that *The Foreigner* is the first Indo - Anglian novel to deal with a genuine human predicament without compromise and without cliches, since Anita Desai's *Voices in the City*.<sup>4</sup>

Sindi's detached view of life and the world, his typical relationships with others make him akin to Albert Camus Meursault in *The Outsider*, as the title of the novel, *The Foreigner*, also suggests.<sup>5</sup> If Meursault "the stranger" is an Algerian Frenchman, Sindi Oberoi "the foreigner" is a Kenya - born Indian. At times there is a similar reproduction of Camus' words in *The Foreigner*.<sup>6</sup> C.N. Srinath points out that June, Babu, Sheila, Mr. Khemka - - all these come alive in this small world of foreigners. For each of them is a foreigner in a sense.<sup>7</sup>

The prime concern of the novelist is with the gradual evolution of Sindi Oberoi from a negative philosophy of detachment to its positive aspect. In the beginning Sindi depends on his own philosophy of non - involvement for happiness, which results in the death of Babu and June. But he slowly learns that real detachment from men and matters comes when one performs one's duty sincerely without any desire for the result, as laid down in *The Gita*.



Born of mixed parentage, Sindi is without a sense of belonging to society no matter where he stays in England or in America or in India. His search for self takes him across continents with no tangible results. He believes that possession generates pain as it implies involvement.

Sindi as a student of Engineering at Boston meets June at a foreign students' gathering. She likes him but he fights hard with himself to escape another affair. Sindi's sense of detachment and rootlessness is evident when June asks him where he was from. Sindi's reaction to the question provides a clue to his alienation:

Everybody always asked me the same silly question. 'Where are you from?' as if it really mattered a great deal where I was from (p.23).

Sindi is the kind of foreigner who feels the pangs of his foreignness in "any circumstance and any country" which reminds one of Ramaswamy of 'The Serpent and the Rope.' In both the novels the sensitive intellectuals long for something beyond themselves. In the very beginning of their encounter June tells Sindi:

There is something strange about you, you know. Something distant. I'd guess that when people are with you they don't feel like they're with a human being. Maybe it's an Indian characteristic, *but I have a feeling you'd be a foreigner anywhere.* (P.33 Italics mine)

Sindi's alienation from the world is not

merely one of geography or nationality but is deeply ingrained in his human psyche.

Sindi is upset at the death of Babu. His sense of alienation becomes acute. He wants to move away from America in search of mental peace. It is unbearable for him to stay there anymore:

The feeling of my nakedness in the hands of existence grew with every passing day and a strong urge possessed me to once again roam the streets of the world. I didn't know where I would go or what the future held for me, but one thing was certain my search had to continue. (p.175)

Sindi's unconcern born of his sense of detachment proves fatal and he fails to meet June before her death. The tragedy upsets Sindi. Now he is able to realise the fallacy of his sense of detachment.

Now I had begun to see the fallacy in it. Detachment consisted of right action and not escape from it. The gods had set a heavy price to teach me just that. (p.193)

Sindi realizes and regrets his indecision and his negative content of detachment. For about twenty years he has moved whichever way life has led him. He has merely learnt to be detached from the world and not himself.

I saw myself as I had always been. An uprooted young man living in the latter half of the 20th century who had become



## 'THE FOREIGNER': AN EXISTENTIAL DILEMMA

75

detached from everything except myself  
( p. 195 )

Sindi feels miserable because he holds himself indirectly responsible for the death of his beloved June and his friend Babu. In an attempt at self-realisation he now questions his own behaviour :

Wouldn't Babu still be living if I had not surrendered my body to June that night we went out for a ride? I thought I was acting out of detachment but was it not merely a desire to prove that I still held the key to June's happiness ?.....

Sindi is moved to see Muthu, in his one-room tenement " spend his nights with eleven people, one of them a tuber cular for ten years". He ultimately believes that right meaning of detachment " consisted in getting involved in the world ", so that it may combat hypocrisy and exhibitionnism. Finally Sindi accepts Muthu's suggestion to take charge of the factory. This sheds light on the " message " of disinterested involvement.

'-- a line of reasoning that led to the inevitable conclusion that for me , detachment consisted in getting involved with the world ( p. 226 )

For the first few weeks he works strenuously late at night, and with the co-operation of all the employees sets the establishment in order. " He involves himself with a positive detachment because " the fruit of it was not his concern ".

Babu with the self-pity, Mr. Khemka with his meaningless materialistic preoccupation, Sheila, living on the brink of life but never entering it , and Sindi himself afraid of commitment, never confront life in its fulness.<sup>8</sup> It is disinterested involvement alone which can break through the selfish instincts of self-preservation and bridge the gap between appearance and reality.<sup>9</sup>

Though Sindi practices detachment in life, he has all along missed the positive content of detachment which leads to meaningful community. As he realises that detachment is not merely negative, he learns of its positive content in right action and not eacape from action.

Arun Joshi's concept of detachment as expounded through Sindi Oberoi appears to be closer to the one explicated by Aldous Huxley. Huxley believes that the ideal man is the non-attached man and his non-attachment is negative only in name. The practice of non-attachment entails the practice of charity, courage, generosity and disinterestedness. Non-attachment imposes the adoption of an intensely positive attitude towards the world. The non-attached man puts an end to pain, not only in himself, but also, to such pain as he may inflict on others. He thus qualifies to be " blessed " and " good ".

Sindi Oberoi's transcendence is clear in his detached and yet compassionate commitment to work in order to involve himself meaningfully in the community. He has towards the end found a heaven after the vigorous quest of meaning that has shaped his life and tormented his psyche.



### FOOT NOTES

1. Arun Joshi, *The foreigner* (Delhi : Orient Paperbacks 1968). All subsequent references in parantheses are to this edition.

2. Quoted in Shyam M. Asnani, "A study of Arun Joshi's Fiction" *The Literary Half - Yearly*, 19, No. 2 ( July 1978 ).

3. Murli Das Melwani, *Themes in Indo - Anglian Literature* (Bareilly : Prakash Book Depot, 1977), p.2.

4. Meenakshi Mukherjee, "Deatchment", *Quest*, 60 ( January - March 1969 ), 103.

5. G.P.Sharma, *Nationalism in Indo- Anglian Literature* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1978), p.313

6. Albert Camus, *The Outsider* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1969 ), p.42.

7. C.N.Srinath, " The Fiction of Arun Joshi ", *The Literary Criterion*, 12, Nos. 2- 3 (1976), 119.

8. Jasbir Jain, "Foreigners and strangers: Arun Joshi's Heroes", *The Journal of Indian Writing in English*, 5, No. 1 ( January 1977 ), 53.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Contributors, patrons and readers may kindly note the change of address with immediate effect : Circulation and payments and correspondance.

The Managing Trustee,  
The TRIVENI FOUNDATION  
1-8-522 / 12, Chikkadpalli  
Hyderabad 500 020.  
( Phone : 661403 )

#### Editorial office :

Prof I. V. Chalapathi Rao  
HIG B 4/ F 10, Bagh Lingampalli  
Hyderabad 500, 044  
( Phone : 664682 ).



## WHO'S WHO AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

- Dr. VAYOTHI: Reader in English, Bharatidasan University, Tiruchirapalli.
- Dr. R. JANARDAN RAO: Retired Principal of Govt. College and poet, Machilipatnam (A.P).
- Dr. (Mrs) T. ASOKA RANI: Reader and Head of the Dept. of, English, Padmavati Women's University, Tirupati.
- Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN: Dean, Dept of Education, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati.
- Dr. D. ANJANEYULU: Journalist and Author, Associate Editor 'TRIVENI' Madras.
- Master MADHUSUDANA VADIYAR: Young poet, Raichur (Karnataka).
- Dr. K. VENKATA REDDY: Professor in English, Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapur.
- Sri. KASTURI BHASKARA RAO: Well-known Artist and Art Teacher.
- Sri. R. SURYANARAYANA MURTI: Retired Principal of Govt. colleges - a poet.
- Ms. B. SIVASANKARI: Well-known writer of short stories in Tamil. Tr. Ms. Sulochana Rengachari, Tuticorin (Tamil Nadu).
- Sri. V. L. V. N. NARENDRA KUMAR: Lecturer, P. G. Dept, of English, Andhra Layola College, Vijayawada.
- Ms. B. INDIRA KUMARI: Poet and writer. Translated many poems and books into English.
- Ms. Y. SATYA SREE: Lecturer in English, St. Pious College, Hyderabad.
- Sri. B. VYAGHRESWARUDU: Lecturer in English, S.K.B College, Amalapuram.
- Sri. M. G. NARASIMHA MURTHY: Retd. College Principal.
- Dr. D. KESAVA RAO: Lecturer in Regional Engineering College, Warangal.
- Dr. P. GANGADHARA SASTRY: Professor, Satya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (Deemed University) Puttaparthi.
- MAMIDIPUDI PATTABHIRAM: Editor, The Hindu, a National Daily, Madras. □







## ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Mr. Justice Nittoor Srinivasa Rau (*Chief Justice of Mysore, Retired*)
- Dr. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya (*Former President, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi*)
- Dr. B. Gopala Reddy (*Former Governor of U.P.*)
- Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar (*Fmer Vice-Chancellor, Andraw University*)
- Dr. K. Satchidananda Murthy (*Former Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission*)
- Sri B.V.S.S. Mani (*Swadharma Swaarjaya Sangha, Maras*)
- Dr. Vidya Niwas Misra (*Chief Editor, Navabharat Times, New Delhi*)
- Mr. Justice Avula Sambasiva Rao (*Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh, Retired*)
- Mr. T.C.A. Ramanujam (*Commissioner of Income Tax, Retired*)
- Dr. I. Panduranga Rao (*Executive Director, Bharatiya Jnanpith, New Delhi*)
- Prof. Kota Sundara Rama Sârma (*Livèrmore, U.S.A.*)

---

---

## WELCOME TO TRIVENI

### FOLD

The following persons recently joined the Triveni family by becoming life - subscribers. The Triveni Foundation expresses its grateful thanks to them.

**Sri J. Venkateswara Rao, Hanamkonda**

**Sri Sitarama Rao, Madras**

**Dr. H.S. Visweswariah, Tirupati**

**Smt. Aruna Vyas, Hyderabad**

**Dr. K. Damodar Rao, Hanamkonda**



## Editorial

# TRIPLE STREAM

Modern educationists whose ideas are borrowed from Western scholars and professors will be surprised to note some of the principles and educational practices obtaining in ancient India long before the first European university came into existence. According to Manu there were three types of education - (1) Loukika (2) Vaidika and (3) Adhyatmika. In other words they are utilitarian, vedik and spiritual. Manual work (what we now call 'work experience') was a component of education. It was not merely 'book learning' or 'rote learning'. For example, students were made to fetch water, gather fire-wood, run errands, tend cattle and sheep, watch fields and stop breaches in dykes. In which way it is different from most of our N. C. C. and N. S. S. activities of today ?

There was no discrimination between pupil and pupil on the basis of economic status. For example Krishna (prince) and Kuchela (pauper) were sent by their teacher Sandipani to fetch water, fire-wood and sacrificial twigs. Once when they did not return from the forest, the teacher went in search of them in pouring rain and in darkness out of love and concern for their welfare. Teachers used to pray that they should get good students who bring credit to their teacher and their country. One such prayer is: "O' creator! just as water flows to the lower level, just as months pass in regular succession, so may brahmacharis (students) come to me".

The philosophy of Indian education never supported a narrow outlook or regionalism. 6000 years ago in Adharvana Veda our Indian teachers proclaimed : "MAATA BHOO MI PUTROHAM PITRUYAH" (The whole world is our mother land. We are the sons of Mother Earth). At about the same time the Rig Veda said : "UPASARPA MAA TARAM BHOOMIM" (dedicate yourself to the service of the world, your mother land) and KRIM VAANTO VISWA MAARYAM" (Make the whole world noble in action). The Vishnu Purana enjoined, "LOKA SAMASTHA SUKHINO BHAVANTU" (may the whole world prosper and be happy). The Upanishads said "VASUDHA IKA KUTUMBAM" (The whole world is a single family). In Taittiriya Upanishad the teacher advises the student who finished his education to speak the truth, to treat the parents, the teacher and the guest as Gods and work for LOKA SANGRAHA. Is this world outlook in any way inferior to the modern concept of the 'Global Village'?

What should be the characteristics of a good teacher? The ancient educationists prescribed nine qualities - "SUCHIH, VAACHASWI, VARCHASWI, DHRUTIMAAN, SMRUTIMAAN, KRUTI, NAMRATAH, UTSAAHI, JIJNAASU - DESIKO NAVALAKSHNAHA (the teacher should have nine qualities - (1) External and internal cleanliness (2) Effective expression, (3) Bright Countenance



## TRIPLE STREAM

3

(Personality) (4) Physical and moral courage (5) Good memory (6) Writing skills (7) Humility (8) Enthusiasm and (9) Eagerness to pursue knowledge.

Is it not a comprehensive checklist comparable to the recommendations of any modern commission on education - Radhakrishnan Commission, Kothari Commission or the New Education Policy Document? Besides, no one was considered to be a worthy teacher without "ANUBHOOTI" (Experience) and 'DARSHANA' (Vision).

There is no surprise that such ideal teachers were treated in the Vedas as equal to Gods (ACHARYA DEVO BHAVA). As time passed, we got the popular idea: "the teacher is Brahma, the teacher is Vishnu, the teacher is Shiva". We have also the converse that the original teachers were Gods themselves - 'Geetacharya' and 'Shiva Charya'. The word 'Acharya' meant one who did not merely cover the syllabus and coach for the examination but taught 'acharas' or how to lead a good life and cultivate good practices and values. As society took care of the teachers' needs and the kings or wealthy people maintained the 'ashrams', education was more or less free. Only after the students began to earn, they could contribute to the upkeep of the school.

The only fee paid by the student at the end of the course was called 'Gurudakshina'. Except in rare cases guru-dakshina was only a token to show

deep debt of gratitude to the teacher who loved the student more than his own son. In many cases gurudakshina was a mere pumpkin, an umbrella, a piece of upper cloth etc. Ofcourse when rich people offered costly things, they were utilised for the improvement of the ashrams. Manu said "The teacher who compels his pupil to pay a sum of money is not fit for inter-dining". There was a sort of social boy-cott. In later eras teachers were permitted to collect tuition fees from those who could afford to pay. One of the Jatakas related the story of the 16 year old son of the Rajah of Benaras who went to Taksha Sila with one thousand pieces of gold - the fee for the teacher who had to take him through the various branches of learning. However, there was no fixed fee. It varied according to the income of the parent.

Aptitude and discipline were rated high among the pupils. The following three categories of students were declared unfit to receive education:

ASUYA KAYA (those who lack interest or aptitude)

ANRUJAVE (who are not truthful or straight forward)

AYATAYA (who lack discipline).

Today our pedagogues of Teacher - Training Colleges talk of 'entering behaviour' and 'terminal behaviour' of the student in 'lesson-plan' etc. In Manduko Panishad, Narada is said to



have gone to Sanatkumar to learn from him. He said, "Teach me, Sir". Sanat Kumar said, "please tell me first what you know already; afterwards I will tell you what is beyond". In other words, without using the modern jargon, Sanatkumar wanted to have an idea of his would-be pupil's 'entering behaviour'. Ofcourse, Narada gave a list of subjects, he had already studied. It shows how the curriculum had developed.

World's great linguists rate Panini's grammar very highly as the work of a path-finder. Panini wrote in 4th century B.C. but mentions a formidable list of 64 predecessors. 'Amara Kosa', a Dictionary in Sanskrit verse, is a pioneering effort in lexicography. It is interesting to note that there were non-Brahmin scholars like Janaka, Chitra Gangyayani and Ajatasatru who gave instruction to Brahmins on scholarly matters and issues of profound philosophy.

Maharshis were not men who led cloistered lives away from society. Salihotra who wrote 'Aswa Shastra' was a Maharshi. Maharshi Vatsayana wrote 'Kama Shastra'. In fact, the great Rishis were all married men living with their families and teaching their pupils. Even their Ashrams were not too far from residential localities. For example 'In Kalidasa's 'Raghu Vamsa' King Dilipa started after his lunch and reached the Ashram before sun-set. He travelled only on horse-drawn coach.

It is a mistake to think that the courses in the ancient and Buddhistic periods were purely literary, theoretical and religious. There were 18 Shilpas which included vocational and job-oriented courses. The subjects consisted of Secular Law, Logic, Atomic Theory, Arithmetic, Music, Flower decoration, Rangoli, Weaving, Pottery, Carpentry, Architecture, Dance, History, Military Art etc.,

Even technical science was recommended. In Rig Veda, Chapter 10, Section 155, the Mantra, 3 says :

"Technical Science is a wonderful thing. It removes poverty and brings prosperity. O' poverty-stricken man! Acquire technical knowledge.... and Remove Poverty and want".

Taksha Sila was a sort of Central University which was internationally popular. Even their methods of instruction, compare favourably with contemporary practices 'Discussion' and 'Questioning' formed an important part of methodology. Huan Tsang, Fahian, It-sing and other Chinese visitors had nothing but praise for the teaching strategies followed in Nalanda, Vikrama Sila, Uddanta Puri and other universities. "Scholars including students took part in conferences of learned men called 'Parishads' and 'Goshties' (seminars). They maintained well-stocked libraries. Ratna dadhi was a 9 storeyed library building housing rare manuscripts.

**- I. V. CHALAPATI RAO**  
Editor



# POPULATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## NEW DIRECTIONS

— Avabai B. Wadia

### INTRODUCTION

As the last years of this century are rapidly slipping by, and as we stand at the threshold of a new millennium, we have reached a crucial watershed in the affairs of mankind.

We must take a look back and a look forward. Have we set our sights on a new vision, a new momentum, an upward thrust to the third millennium where the quality of life will be at the highest pitch ever achieved? What do we have to offer the coming generations?

Looking back, we find that globally, the 20th Century has seen the production of untold wealth, of remarkable new inventions and resources, of an enrichment of material living standards for an increasing number of people, of an unprecedented revolution in communications, freedom from the shackles of colonialism and of false ideas of racial superiority, class and caste constrictions, and the right of every person to freedom and his or her own individuality.

The other side of the coin shows, however, that this century has seen the most brutal of wars, instability, violence, millions of uprooted and displaced persons, deepening poverty in contrast to increasing riches, exploitive politics endangering a liberal political culture, with democratic values receiving

different and self-serving interpretations in rich and poor countries and similarly coloured views on human rights, and resources which are squandered wantonly.

Among the recent global events, the cold war and its alignments have ended, ideologies have collapsed, and a new wind is blowing, reaching out to all countries (both to their advantage and detriment). The new creeds embrace economic liberalisation and globalisation; of individualism, individual freedoms and human rights (without clarity as to whose, and against whom). The communications revolution is sending out powerful messages. These are penetrating our homes and bedrooms, and bending our minds, values and cultural heritages in extraordinary ways. Rabindranath Tagore said more than 60 years ago: "the impertinence of material dominion is extremely old; the revelation of spirit in Man is ever modern though born of an immemorial past." We need that revelation of spirit to cope with rapid changes.

The 20th century has ushered in many revolutions - of the space age, of the incredible inventiveness of science and technology, and, a breadth of vision of the living world, of the spaceship Earth, of the universe.

It is a truism now to speak of the world becoming a global village. But has



this been accompanied by humans becoming a global community? This then, must be the major challenge to mankind.

## INDIA TODAY

In India, a half-century of freedom has brought us face to face with almost intractable problems for whose solution only we can take responsibility. Some of these problems have been inherited from our past subjugation, but others are of our own making. If poverty and economic deprivation have been inherited, we have exacerbated them by perpetuating social backwardness, inequalities of gender and caste, outmoded traditions and divisions, lessening tolerance of religion and beliefs and a new individualistic cynicism.

Among our main tasks are :

- \* to eliminate poverty
- \* to adopt and apply a holistic view of economic growth with sustainable development and environmental concerns
- \* to liberate economic enterprise for the creation and sharing of wealth and productivity, among all sectors of the people
- \* to equip people through adequate measures of health, education, skills, and intellectual and moral capabilities to raise the quality of life.
- \* to revitalise social structures and create new norms where equality

and freedom irrespective of class, caste, religion or gender can be practised as human rights and responsibilities.

- \* to base the system of politics and governance on the best democratic traditions free from exploitative power.

These are only the broad brush strokes and they need to be translated into viable propositions and concretised. But we require more than material means to do so. We need a new faith and vision and a sense of direction of our own making. It was Einstein who once said that "it is more difficult to disintegrate a prejudice than to split the atom" and our present state of clinging to self-centred prejudices has to change.

## A TURNING POINT

In our country, we have been trying to embody our ideas and the direction in which to go, through the main instrument of the Five Year Plans. We have had our successes and failures. But currently, events are overtaking such planning, as for instance, the 8th Five Year Plan.

The most striking change in the 1990's has been the privatisation and globalisation of the economy. It is a turning point and is expected to lead India into the big-player league. But in a country where poverty affects one-third of a huge population, the encouragement of private enterprise must be accompanied by safety nets. The dangers inherent in structural



## POPULATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT NEW DIRECTIONS

7

adjustment policies are real. This requires a wise and far-seeing balancing act.

Furthermore, the release of new energies through private enterprise cannot be confined only to economic matters, but must inevitably affect the social and human spheres where people can learn to help themselves, and do it rapidly. Economic liberalisation policies are galvanising the world of industry and the corporate sector, but its effects on agriculture, rural development, and raising human resource levels are yet to be visible. So far, little attention is being paid to improve human capacities and qualities. In factory and farm and in all occupations, competitiveness and new challenges cannot be met without top class workers and top class people in general.

### Population Growth: A Pervasive factor

Running through all these aspects and especially in creating employment and employable people, is the factor of population growth. This is a world-wide phenomenon which was ushered in by the industrial age, and applies to all countries in different forms.

The population phenomenon hit Western Europe more than two centuries ago and was solved very gradually and in line with rising economic prosperity and massive migrations to other lands. Increases in population came much later

to countries like India (and were accelerated after independence when better health and other measures began to be applied. The solutions had to be different from those in the West.

Conscious measures to contain population growth have been planned and implemented and they have to be telescoped within a generation or so. The East Asian countries, with similar problems but starting much later than India, have already neutralised their population in their remarkable progress and prosperity. China with the largest population in the world, has reduced its growth rate to 1.3 %, India, second most populous nation is still growing at 1.9 % and will overtake China in a few years unless truly vigorous action is undertaken. India's population will cross the one billion mark in the year 2000, and will be 1.3 billion by the next 30 years from now. It is estimated that it will stabilise at approximately 1.8 billion (twice its present size) by about the end of the next century.

### Wasting Precious Time

Our population and family planning programmes are now at a cross roads. We are wasting precious time in carrying on a programme which has now become somewhat tattered, uninspiring, lacking any expression of political will or a dynamic structure and organisation. A huge number of people employed in the programme are drawing salaries but mostly perpetuating failure.



Many have drawn attention to this state of affairs and the Government is aware of it but as yet there is no breakthrough.

The programme needs re-shaping conceptually and in practical measures. Its ethical, humanitarian and people-centred basis must be emphasised. Social and economic paradigms must be promoted wherein people themselves feel that the small family is the most viable one.

The National Development Council did take cognisance of population concerns as far back as 1991 and in 1992 issued a report which mostly reiterated old ideas. However, it went on to recommend that a Working Group be established for drafting a new population policy for consideration by parliament. This Group was constituted in July 1993 and submitted its Report in May 1994. One understands that presently, the Report is in the process of the usual not-so-merry-go-round of being circulated for ascertaining the views of various Ministries and/or States. These lethargic procedures unfortunately kill enthusiasm, new thinking, and a revival of vigorous efforts.

Some successes have been achieved whereby after years of work, the birth, death and infant mortality rates have come down several points and at present stand at 29.1, 9.1 and 79 respectively. The growth rate is 1.9% (SRS 1992), expectation of life has gone

up, but unfortunately, the sex ratio has deteriorated to 929 : 1000. The total fertility rate is now at 3.6 from over 6 in the 1940's. These are all-India figures. A demographic transition has started from the southern part of the country. Kerala, Tamil nadu and tiny Goa are the examples. But the four giant States in the north remain sluggish. The pace is too slow and every year an addition of 17 million people will soon lead India to become the most populous country in the world, without resources to match.

The Draft Population Policy attempts to meet and overcome the drawbacks of the present programme. Some of these draw-backs are that it is :

- highly centralised.
- bureaucratised.
- demographic rather than developmental.
- not sufficiently integrated except with MCH (which leaves men out, among other things).
- incentive/disincentive in an unimaginative way.
- medically dependent, except for some spacing methods.
- mass-based rather than respecting the individual and his/her needs.
- externalised, as from Government to people, and not people-centred where communities and



## POPULATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT NEW DIRECTIONS

9

NGOs play a vigorous role.

- isolated from other human development measures.

The Draft National Population Policy has brought together three vital aspects, summed up in the phrase of being "pro nature, pro poor, pro women", to show that the gaps must be closed in the pursuit of measures for population, development and the environment, with the aim of raising the quality of life for all. Its approach is not demographic as such, nor contraceptive - oriented so much as based on a broad front of social and human development. Quality services in health, MCH and family planning are emphasised along with a whole constellation of measures in an interlinked manner, which will help to advance social development and to reduce population growth. It strongly emphasises the minimum needs programme as a means to this end.

One of its most important features is the emphasis on gender equity and equality. No previous document on population and development has emphasised women's rights and role as has the draft policy.

The policy also emphasizes in unequivocal terms the role of NGOs, and this must be implemented in the right spirit of participation in planning as well as service delivery. For this to happen effectively, NGOs must also observe high standards of integrity, accountability and capability.

A radical change in structure has been recommended by the policy. This is the setting up of a Population and Social Development Commission consisting mostly of non-officials, with effective executive powers with a corresponding fund. There are precedents in other countries for such a step, most notably in Indonesia.

I cannot end without commenting on the forthcoming women's conference in Beijing. Women have learnt to speak forcefully and even dominate, as at Cairo. But Beijing is their own parade ground and even battle-ground. The Forward looking strategies at the Nairobi Conference in 1985 gave excellent guidelines. Their fulfilment is incomplete. Beijing must now provide the ultimate push towards this. In particular, the voices of Indian, Asian and African women must be heard loud and strong, speaking their own minds and thoughts, and not merely echoing western leads.

We have to ensure that 2000 years of regarding women mainly as child bearers and rearers, as perpetuators of the human race, and as the adjuncts of men, is transformed in the third millenium to recognising them as individuals in their own right as the half of humanity, with full rights to act as such in all spheres of human endeavours and progress.

[ *D.V. Krishna Rao Endowment*  
Lecture delivered on 9-5-1995 at  
Andhra Mahila Sabha, Hyderabad,  
Edited because of space constrictions ]



# CHINKS IN THE ARMOUR RUDOLPH FISHER'S "THE CONJURE-MAN DIES" as a sleuth novel

— B. Girija Bai

The title conjures up visions of intriguing mystery; the name of the writer rings no bell. That is Rudolph Fisher and his single detective novel **The Conjure - man Dies**. Fisher's name is not chronicled anywhere in the history of detective fiction -either amongst American detective writers or amongst Black American detective writers.

It is generally believed that Chester Himes is the first Black American detective writer. In actuality Fisher's novel pre-dates Himes, making Fisher truly the first Black American detective novelist. Thus, historically, **The Conjure - man Dies** is the first detective novel written by a Black American writer.

This, perhaps, is the most valuable aspect of the novel. For, judging it purely by its merits as a work of sleuth fiction, one may tend to receive it with an attitude of reticence, of raised brow and pursed lips. This comment is ventured in spite of the fact that Stanley Ellin has written the introduction to the reprint edition consulted here. This latter seems to have been a due regard to the book's historical value and to its illuminating focus on Harlem life which throws into stark relief their social attitudes and behaviour.

But before wading into the

critical waters, a summary of the story first. The four -storeyed house 13w, 130th in Henley, owned by undertaker Samuel Crouch, is occpied by an African called Frimbo, who seemed to be making a fortune by fortune - telling and, as believed popularly, by turning their fortunes for a consideration. On Saturday, the fifth February, as he was speaking with a client (Jink Jenkins), Frimbo suddenly becomes silent. The bewildered client jumps up to see what was wrong and finds him prone. He chases his friend (Bubber Brown) in the reception to get a doctor, who was fortunately available across the road - Dr. John Archer. M.D. On examination he finds the man dead and marks of violent attack on his head, and sees that the police is informed. The police detective Perry Dart assigned to the case turns out to be a great pal of the doctor's. Dart solicits Archer's (of superior intelligence) help in solving the puzzle, which suits the doc well enough (native curiosity).

By the time they complete investigation of the premises, interrogation of those present, etc, they discover that the corpse had vanished. An hour later after a futile reinspection of the premises by Dart and company, suddenly Frimbo appears claiming he was dead alright but has come back



through a special power of his, and insists the murderer be caught and punished deservingly. He also suggests he be allowed to re-construct the scene and identify the criminal by his special methods, forty- eight hours later, Monday night, at eleven. During this period, however, the detectives learn that the dead man was Frimbo's servitor, and suspect Frimbo, though they could not supply a convincing motive. But Monday night, without allowing Frimbo to continue with his proceedings till end, Dart hastily interrupts and confronts him with this supposed truth and places him under arrest. Instead of lying and denying, Frimbo makes stunning revelations, towards the end of which, right in front of every one present, another murder takes place: Frimbo's. And if the murderer could not escape, only Frimbo's ingenuity of arrangements was to be thanked for.

The story begins with a murder and ends with one. The first one swings the whodunnit with a bang; the second is a lark.

The progress of story in a detective novel is actually a race in cerebrating between the reader and the sleuth: who will solve the puzzle first and right? The only advantage of the sleuth lies in the speed and acuity of his rational thinking prowess. And the solution to the puzzle at last should be consequent upon the logical deduction by the sleuth - never to be independent of it.

Therefore, in a crime mystery there is no place for wasteful information. Every minute detail must

have a bearing upon the mystery, or else it has no right to be there at all. A hackneyed, invariant, formula plot is tolerable, but not a single piece of irrelevant information.

The sleuth too should be shrewd, efficient, economical and unsparing - almost ruthlessly so - with a sharp and fast penetrating mind. With this given, yet, sleuthing as such is guided by two fundamental rules: never trust anybody; never take anything for granted. Ignoring these would only mean naivete and may prove costly, regrettable - even fatal - to the sleuth. So a Shakespeare can afford to be slipshod, not a sleuth story - teller.

Fisher's **The Conjure - man Dies** transgresses these rule and guidelines. To consider the lapses one by one.

1. Doc Archer examines the dead body before Dart arrives, and again in the presence of Dart, to discover the manner of murder (choking). Having seen the face of the corpse very closely for about five to ten minutes, later when Frimbo appears claiming to have come back from death, Doc Archer could not identify him with certainty.
2. During inspection of the premises the detectives keep running into a dumbwaiter shaft from which the dumbwaiter is missing, with a door leading to it on each floor, some old gears and ropes dangling from its roof. Even after the disappearance of the corpse, this has not been examined with



deserving curiosity, where as the reader is restless to operate the switches and crank the levers and see what would happen. Later Frimbo himself would tell them that it had a lift which he was using to commute between floors (172) without attracting attention.

3. Inside the principal chamber (the murder room) itself, a switch box carrying a special (x-ray) current is found. Doc Archer is curious why special current was necessary, but it is not further probed. Even which points are connected to the switch - box is not found out.
4. In Frimbo's laboratory behind the main room, a small TV receptor and a gleaming black electric motor are found among other apparatus and specimens. These too not been inspected thoroughly.
5. The front room, which is also the psychist's reception room, is described as consisting of weird decorations and curiosities on the walls, from which the weapon of offence is presumed to have been taken. How could the offender take it from there without provoking curiosity in other clients?
6. An extension light is plugged into one of the hall sockets to supplement and improve the illumination inside the principal room chosen for questioning. When the droplight in the room is snapped out, the extension light too snaps out. Why?

7. While everybody, including the sleuth and his police retinue, are present in the main room, the rear door (found locked during inspection) opens and a man enters the room; no one hears either the lock turn or the door open. When every natural exit is kept guarded, how could he enter without anyone noticing? Even if the room was dark?
8. Doc Archer vouches for Martha Crouch's (the undertaker's wife) character and Dart unblinkingly accepts it. Later we would learn she was the motive behind the murder.
9. On inspecting Frimbo's bedroom Dart comes to the conclusion that he is a woman-hater and sticks to it. Here if he had needed Archer's suggestions that he could be a clever paramour entertaining several women parallelly, Dart would have gone ahead, made some inquiries, which would have revealed some interesting details. But Dart did not heed and Archer was overly concerned about losing Dart's faith in him rather than pressing a valid point further. Not quite the way of sleuth wisdom.
10. During interrogations too some curious incidents come to light. Jinx, of course, is rightly suspected on account of his attitude towards his handkerchief. Hicks, the dopey, too becomes a suspect because of providing adequate motive though his story is ridiculous. Whether



## CHINKS IN THE ARMOUR RUDOLPH FISHER'S "THE CONJURE-MAN DIES"

13

Webb collected the ten bucks from the flunkey or not is not made known.

11. About Crouch. His pecuniary interest is quite in order. His excessively inquisitive curiosity troubles the reader but the police detective is complacent as also the detective associate and wiseguy Archer. Not only does Dart tell him how the murder was committed, which is okay, but he also goes on to explain on what lines the investigation is progressing and what is its future course. Crouch's suggestion about avoiding finger prints by using a hankey (91) did not provoke their suspicion. Even the comment he volunteers on his ability to change the appearance (91, 92) fails to alert their curiosity while the reader smells rat.

12. Easley Jones, the railroad porter, too is a curious character. (at the end we would learn he is only an alias of Crouch). While others enter the chamber only after being ushered, this man just barges in, yet does not meet with reproof. He is the only one among those on the premises to evince interest in the investigation. He was alone too in over-solicitously coming forward to help the police. Again Dart explains everything to him patiently and obediently. With Hicks, Webb and Jenkins supplying a convincing motive, Dart had mentally marked one of them as the culprit and did not

think it necessary to exercise the mind any further. Dart seems to be a man of decisive opinion. To a sleuth everything should look suspicious until proved otherwise; the more convincingly innocent should only make him the more cautious towards it. His theories and opinions should be plastic and flexible, not watertight. But not so with Perry Dart.

Crouch's alibi too is not investigated. From nine till he came there, roughly at half-past eleven that is, he claims to have spent at the Forty (88). A thorough probing would have disclosed facts that did not check well. Because, Easley Jones was at Frimbo's at twenty-past ten; he was ushered in after half-past ten; and the consultation would have lasted at least five minutes. He could not have left without finishing the consultation or else there would have been a different story altogether. So, in all he had spent at least twenty minutes at Frimbo's. Then he had to go back, change his appearance and join the game at the Forty, which would have taken at least fifteen minutes. Likewise, before coming to Frimbo's he had to leave the Forty and go somewhere (perhaps that landlady's) to don the makeup of Easley Jones; another fifteen minutes. That is, for about an hour at the minimum, Crouch was away from the Forty.

After the interrogation, taking Hicks and Jenkins into custody, Dart has all others tailed except Crouch, who is not a suspect. Even here nothing curious comes up. The tail on Easley Jones should have met with some



perplexing behaviour. But curiously, nothing turns up.

The fingerprint on the weapon of offence to which Dart clings jealously, which was his one solid proof, together with Jenkins' disowned handkerchief enabled him converge his thought on Jenkins - till Doc Archer took it into his head to falsify it and avert suspicion from Jenkins. The most important point here is, the lone thumb print.

A club used for clobbering someone on the head would have been gripped securely by wrapping the fingers tightly around the non-hitting end of it; which would leave either the prints of all five fingers or the other four fingers but not of thumb. Supposing as Crouch pointed out, the culprit had used a hankey; there would have been no prints left; or, supposing he had taken care to wipe the prints, then he would not leave a thumb-mark just for sample. Even supposing someone handled it out of mere curiosity, he could not have lifted it with thumb alone, nor would he have worried about fingerprints. Looked at anyway, this lone thumb print to which Dart clings as to his dear life, is an obvious decoy and Dart cuts a pathetic figure swallowing it, while the reader watches incredulously. It is amazing that a trained police detective is not aware of the transfer trick demonstrated by Archer, a medicine man.

Even a clownish fellow like Brown, whose main interest was to get his pal Jenkins out, had the ingenuity to think of searching the premises. Dart the sleuth, with a murder on hand and

burdened with the responsibility of smoking out a vanished corpse, does not even consider it. The only bit of what can be legitimately called investigation that he had done during the forty-eight hour interval was the tracking down of the owner of the false teeth: Frimbo's servitor (the vanished corpse).

Now to the focal person of the mystery - Frimbo, the psychist. Only after the disappearance of the corpse we meet Frimbo, identified by Martha Crouch. Till then his acquaintance is only through hearsay - through his landlord Samuel Crouch and the six persons who came to see him on business. The image that emerges for the reader is that of an extremely orderly person, intelligent as well as smart and, undoubtedly of an extraordinarily high mental order. This last is very important. Because, the wise and the all-knowing doc Archer, of native curiosity and of his active neurons of the pallium, first thinks he is a charlatan, then wonders if he was a seer and a prophet, next decides him to be a paranoiac, finally settles down to calling him a murderer. Here, the data which Fisher selects to present during the first meeting of Frimbo and Doc Archer is not quite relevant. The Doc suggests, now that he (Frimbo) has mastered the western ways of thinking to the extent of making original contributions, he can go back and live like the king that he is instead of being a nobody in America. To which Frimbo replies, "No. There are things one never forgets", and goes back twenty years to relate the Buwongo rite of procreation. Though colourful and entertaining, this has no true bearing



## CHINKS IN THE ARMOUR RUDOLPH FISHER'S "THE CONJURE-MAN DIES"

15

on the central story not even on his true personality. If the rite of procreation was the thing that he could never forget, then Frimbo had more reason to go back than to stay behind. After that, their conversation shifts to his childhood, education, coming to America and the problems he had to face in the process, we are told. All this was disposed of in one breath, with a mere wave of the hand. Fisher could have more helpfully described what kind of hardships he faced in getting admitted into the Harvard. With more and revealing information on this the reader would be equipped with as much insight into Frimbo's background as Doc Archer and be competent to consider the homicidal paranoid theory.

As it is, the sleuth is given advantage over the reader by being allowed to possess more information about a vital aspect. The reader, with the information made available to him, has every reason to repudiate the paranoid theory, find it prejudicious, an indicator of Archer's sense of superiority offended. So far he had been the acknowledged cerebral superior; even the official sleuth had admitted it. Here comes a black African, in whom the doc without hesitation recognizes his superior, and to crown it, he had a finely tuned inner harmony which gives him his special powers of prediction and insight. We do not swallow the gag of murdered Frimbo coming back to life, etc. We are well aware that Frimbo is somehow connected with the disappearance of the corpse, but it is not sufficient to pin a murder charge on him. Even Brown's discovery of his

burning down the body is not sufficient for a murder rap. He might have burnt the body for the same reasons that made him hide it. Or he might have done so because he had mutilated the body to procure material for his unspecified biological experiments. He is and must be one of the suspects till the mystery is unravelled. no more, no less. The moment the identity of the false teeth is established, Frimbo's guilt is almost decided in the minds of the sleuths. They do not, for a moment, even consider other possibilities after that, only working to confirm that one theory. Yet, there is no possible motive except doc Archer's strange and far-fetching paranoid theory.

The paranoid theory would hold if the murdered had been a white man - symbol of the cause of his hardships and humiliations. This victim is not even his equal or as successful. There is absolutely no comparison. Alternatively, if we accept that Frimbo had murdered the flunkey because he discovered the fellow cheating him in the number game or conspiring to murder him (Frimbo), the paranoid theory fails.

Even conceding Frimbo's guilt, a man of his ingenuity and lifestyle, with his goofy setup, could have done it on the quiet and got rid of the body exactly as he did without calling anybody's attention to it. In fact, Frimbo himself brought the murder to his client's notice. However we may look at it, Frimbo does not fill the suspect bill unless it was an accident. With so many loose tags jumbling up the plot, there is not enough ground for accident theory. But quite to



the reader's amusement, the flunkey's murder was a kind of accident, as it would later become clear, though not committed by Frimbo.

The information provided on Frimbo's exceptional powers also has been completely ignored.

Of what the clients had narrated of Frimbo's revelations, and what Archer's own experience of his first interview revealed to him, not the least heed has been given to these details though they were compulsively calling for attention. That there was nothing fraudulent about Frimbo's extraordinarily sharp insight must have become clear to doc Archer, just as the blood test he demonstrated was a fraud. In fact Frimbo tells Archer in so many words that he might cease to exist beyond Monday night. While seeing Jenkins's future suddenly he meets with darkness after Monday night, which is an indicator of his death. None of this extraordinary future-seeing gift of the man Archer takes into consideration. It would be seen later that Frimbo's prediction comes true Monday night. Certainly, a man cannot be branded a homicidal paranoiac because he expresses some bitterness at the negative experiences he had? Would not all of us react cynically and bitterly meeting with negative experiences?

Frimbo himself suggests his special method be permitted only as a counter-check. Quite obviously he was in no hurry to run away into hiding, and he could not have escaped anyway since the house was guarded. Nor was he

aiming to violate the law, at least apparently. But Dart - whether he was advised / supported by Archer in this is not known - was in too much of a haste to allow the demonstration till its completion, and amuck in front of the police, an avoidable murder takes place. Frimbo had to pay with his life for Dart's sloppy and inept handling. He did not even bother to frisk those present for a weapon - as a general measure of caution - before assembling. The possibility of another murder did not occur at all to this police detective.

With all these glaring deficiencies, Fisher's book naturally fails as a satisfying detective novel. His detectives are clownish, lacking the sharp sixth sense and the finely-honed instinct that are so vital to the success and survival of a sleuth. They cannot stand competition with the reader in the battle of wits, in ratiocination, in logical deduction, in plowing through the maze, in finding the solution. For, Martha Crouch and Easley Jones and the dumbwaiter Shaft appear false and suspicious to the reader right from the beginning. Clearly these sleuths do not belong to the hard-boiled school. They are only poor imitations of the classic scientific ratiocinative school.

Having selected a novel plot and an interesting central character like Frimbo, with careful and clever handling of sleuthing aspects and skillful manipulation of clues, 'The Conjure-man Dies' would have made a gripping story.

Though little information is available as to the popularity of this novel at the time of its first publication



## CHINKS IN THE ARMOUR RUDOLPH FISHER'S "THE CONJURE-MAN DIES"

17

in 1928, a Fisher bibliography does indicate its having been reviewed in ten magazines. The blurbs proclaim it to be a first rate detective thriller with humour and clever plot. Besides apparently it had merited a reprint edition, and no less a person than Stanley Ellin, an eminence in his own right in the field of sleuth fiction, had found it worth introducing. Yet, this is the first book so far encountered by this author where the answer to the whodunnit becomes known incidentally and not as a consequence of the sleuth's clever investigation.

Apart from this single novel, Fisher wrote one other sleuth story, John Archer's Nose, a short story featuring the same Dart-Archer detective team. Apparently he was intending to produce a series of detective stories - novels or short stories - featuring this team. Unfortunately, his early death defeated his intentions. The short story is, however, better constructed as far as sleuthing aspects go.

From the short publisher's note and introductions to his book it can be gathered that Fisher, a student of extraordinary brilliance at the university, a doctor (physician and roentegenologist), died young like his sharp-psyched hero (Frimbo alone is the true hero of Conjure-man) Frimbo. He published another novel, *The Walls of Jericho*, a non-detective; about fifteen short stories, and some professional essays; was a powerful writer; and - here is the rub - he used to write with his left hand while he practised with his right. Well, certainly looks like he could

have used his right hand while writing sleuth fiction.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Editor's note to John Archer's Nose. in Margaret Perry, ed., *The Short Fiction of Rudolph Fisher*, Greenwood Press, Inc., Connecticut, 1987, P. 176.
2. Frimbo himself declares his powers of prediction and invision a result of acute concentration. Even the mystery of his servitor's murder he calls a problem in logic and perfectly calculable (230).
3. Corroborated by his clients Jenkins and Jones (Alias Crouch). Jones actually tells the detectives that Frimbo during consultation, "had seen murder in my heart for somebody" (9129). Even that did not provoke their curiosity.
4. "..... the abrupt termination which cut off my vision could be either his (Jenkins) or mine." (276).
5. Bibliography section. The short fiction of Rudolph Fisher.
6. Editor's note to John Archer's nose. *ibidem*.
7. Foreword to *The Walls of Jericho*, New York Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969, Afro-American Cultural Series.
8. Notes on the fly-leaf of *The Conjure-Man Dies*, New York : Arno Press and The New York Times, 1971.



## A Poem

# IT'S MAN'S THAT'S LIFE

— Dr. C. Narayana Reddy

The sea that craves for change  
Seeks to leap like man  
How sorrowful is the sea's life ?  
It swells but never leaps up to reach the sky  
Squirm like a worm at night,  
It never crosses the threshold  
But it's man's that's life  
Barely six feet tall  
He furrows the skies with the sickle of his head,  
And imprints on the starry constellations' foreheads  
The millennia in the making  
The sea has no other go  
But to imitate man  
How dare the sea match  
Man's flaming spirit ?  
He explodes silence with a deafening sound  
And makes a devastating flame of thirst  
The sea then,  
is but a bird twittering in a cage  
The sea and the woods  
The desert and the highway  
All dance to the tunes of man -  
Man who is indeed a soldier  
Who daily sounds the death - Knell of death.

---

( Translated into English by :  
**Prof. C. R. Visweswara Rao**  
of S. K. University, The original poem was in Telugu  
'Batukante Manishidi' )



# WAR AND NO PEACE : A STUDY ON ARUN JOSHI'S "THE HOMECOMING"

*"O, let my looks be then the eloquence  
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast".*

- William Shakespeare

— Dr. Ch. A. Rajendra Prasad

A few writers only could capture life in its complexity and totality like Arun Joshi. His sudden demise, in 1993, would cause an irreparable loss to the field of Indian writing in English. Though much has been said on his novels and novelistic techniques, most of his short stories have remained undiscussed. In this paper an attempt is made to appreciate the artistry of Arun Joshi as a short story writer as revealed in his short story, *The Homecoming*<sup>1</sup>.

Like his major fiction, Arun Joshi's short fiction too reverberates with existential connotations. But Joshi was mature enough not to be a mere votary of a particular school of thought or philosophy. He chose to present life in all its facets which include the seamy side. Though his forte is psychological realism, his works are not mere objective and dry psychological analyses. Arun Joshi himself explained what he was after in his fictional endeavour : "I seek a belief and a faith beyond psychology"<sup>2</sup>.

Arun Joshi excels in short story writing as well as in his major fiction writing. His short stories are not a mere account of anecdotalage. Likewise, they are not purely to glory in sharp or surprise ending. Arun Joshi's short stories conform to what Manjeri Isvaran expected in a good short story : it (the story) must catch the eternal in the casual, invest a moment with the immensity of time"<sup>3</sup>.

Arun Joshi's *The Homecoming*, included in his anthology, *Survivor*, is his typical short story. As has been said by M.K.Naik, it is "a totally unsentimental" and "the best story" in the collection. The protagonist, a war survivor, cannot erase the impact of war ravages (on his psyche) which he has encountered as a young lieutenant in the Indian Army. Joshi realistically portrays how the protagonist's psyche has splintered off as a result of his excruciating experiences in a war. The war debilitates him psychologically. Consequently, he remains alienated from his family members, the society around him and from his own past life. On his returning from the war he finds himself "a changed man, in the changed world"<sup>4</sup>.

The cool narration at times in understating manner rightly captures the alienated and depressed mood of the protagonist. He recalls the first dreadful experience he has met with in the war; "he did not quite know what was rough and what was not. It was true, though, that half his men had been killed during the first two weeks. Nine had died on the very first night." (1.11)

The nameless protagonist is not himself since his return from the war that has ended on Eastern Front in Dinajpur. By not naming the protagonist, the writer poignantly proves that no sensitive youth, placed in the given situation, can feel



differently from the protagonist. M.K.Naik aptly highlights the significance of this aspect : ".....the fact that the protagonist has no name tends to make him a representative figure<sup>6</sup>".

The protagonist's homecoming is not a homecoming as he is not at peace with himself. The war memories are still green in his mind, and they keep raw his wounded psyche. His family members and his fiancée's welcoming him home at the railway station fails to cheer him up. Somehow, this 'reunion' cannot 'reunite' him with his family members.

It is no wonder, if his fiancée's worrying about her "staying cooped indoors", and thereby her "eating too much" and as a remedial measure her contemplating "doing dieting" force him to recall the chronically famished situation on the war front : "Now, where he had come from for days on, and, he had not met a man, woman, or child, who had not been hungry; constantly hungry. .... after the ceasefire he had supervised a relief station. People used to line up two hours in advance although there was nothing to do except sit and watch the cooks and sniff the air". (p. 98) The protagonist cannot help juxtaposing the ugly reality of the war and a sophisticated woman's health concerns.

He is benumbed with his war experiences. The ever-haunting dreadful pictures of the war make him ponder over the relevance and meaning of his getting married and lead a normal life as if nothing has ever happened. In brief, irrationality and futility of life turn him into a recluse in his native environs.

Basically Joshi's protagonists seem to grope for meaning and purpose of life. Loaded with this heavy burden, they often look strange. They may not totally succeed

in realising their ambition in their life time but they make their existence worthwhile by making a ceaseless effort to reach the goal. In a way, it is "hunger of the spirit"<sup>7</sup> that drives these loners, strangers and recluses.

If only there is an empathetic soul around him, the protagonist might have got some respite from his unending agony. His dear and near are too engrossed in 'their little worlds' to come near his heart. As they have turned 'strangers', the protagonist can no longer feel 'oneness' with them. The protagonist helplessly admits his getting distanced from his sister: "Now she had changed..... she wore strange clothes and shiny chains and goggles. She wore goggles even at night." (p. 99).

It is not merely his sister going arty-arty. But it is a situation of young people getting desensitized, and turning into a sort of dandies and robots that wear fashionable dresses and mouth high-sounding platitudes in the name of 'modernization'.

Joshi subtly suggests that the sorrow of the nation is its morally bankrupt, and unconscientious youth.

To his utter dismay, the protagonist could see through the hollowness and hypocrisy of his 'one time' friends. Their nonchalant and half-knowledgeable talk on warfare thoroughly puzzles him. During a get-together, one of his friends, 'obviously' a poet, comes up with a 'spontaneous' poem to pay 'homage' to the dead soldiers. The poet vows to avenge the untimely deaths : ".....the poet concluded, no matter, comrades you shall not be forgotten nor your death go unavenged." (p.101) The enthusiastic poet fighting a war on paper looks sad and ridiculous to the protagonist. In the face of 'parody' of heroism and patriotism, the soldier in the protagonist gets further silenced.



## WAR AND NO PEACE : A STUDY ON ARUN JOSHI'S "THE HOMECOMING"

21

despite the brimming agony in his heart, the protagonist struggles hard to put on a face of stoicism.

He remembers, for example :

"Pushing a boat off a bank, under the light of stars, into a pitch-black stream whose names he did not know. They had been detailed to demolish a bridge. When he pushed them off the bank, he knew they would not come back. So did they. Then there was the school full of girls that had been the brothel for a battalion. (p.101-102).

Harsh reality of war and its attendant inhumanity trouble him endlessly, and he gets bogged down in them. Being entrapped in the depths of agony, the protagonist learns that he has been awarded the Vir Chakra for his proven valour.

The news does not make him happy. Instead, the occasion forces him to recall a nightmarish incident of the war when a Subedar has laid down his life to save his life.

The protagonist's subsequent visit to the bereaved family of the Subedar to console them leaves him sad. He wonders at the fate of the Subedar's widow; "He wondered what a girl did when she got widowed at twenty and could not marry again." (p. 104)

Quite unmindful of 'the ceaseless war' that goes on inside the mind of the protagonist, the world around him is as ever bent upon carrying on with its engrossing existence. being 'static' in their respective worlds, both, the protagonist and 'the outside world' do not know how to get reconciled with each other.

There was his sister with her new car, the chains around her waist jangling

everytime she moved. There were the poets who had not seen a gun and arty-arty girls, and charity fetes and speeches on the radio. He did not know how to fit it all together.... (p.104)

Joshi has revealed his consummate artistic skill by not facilely resolving the psychological crisis of the protagonist. The 'indeterminate ending' of the story highlights the seriousness of the problem which may have no satisfactory solution. Moreover the open ending of the story motivates the readers to ponder over many an existential problem. The crisis of the protagonist has universal ramifications also, as at any time, one may find oneself stuck with a situation akin to the protagonist's, and thereby languish for ever.

### NOTES

1. Arun Joshi, *The Survivor* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1975). Subsequent references are to this text, and are parenthetically incorporated.
2. Sujatha Mathai, Interview, 'I am a stranger to my books,' *The Times of India*, July 10, 1987.
3. Cited in M.K.Naik, *A History of Indian English Literature* (New Delhi : Sahitya akademi, 1989) p. 179.
4. *ibid.*, p. 250.
5. *loc. cit.*
6. M. K. Naik, Ed., *The Indian Short Stories: A Representative Anthology* (New Delhi : Arnold-Heinemann, 1984) pp.23-24.
7. Sujatha Mathai, Interview, "I am a stranger to my books", *The Times of India*, July 10, 1987.



## A Poem

# THE HOUSE

— Dr. B. Parvati

Like an isolated, alone,  
Stood the magnificent house in the midst  
Of the city. Tall trees sheltered it from sun and  
Curtained the house from viewer's gaze.  
Quiet reigned in it in a sea of noise  
Its height proclaimed its wealth, achievement.  
Then one day it died a violent death  
Like a dog run over on a road with a red trickle at its mouth.  
Glass windowed top floor toppled to the ground.  
Thunder-struck, quake-hit it seemed.  
Roofless walls on which once wooden frames stood  
Stood like burnt trees, waiting for the bulldozer  
To be grazed to be dissolved in a day.  
Desert quiet descended on a barren place.  
They sang about tall towers and a cool swimming pool  
And the song was but begun  
When it fell into a swoon.  
In the midst of a city a lovely spot.  
The good old house died a violent death.



# THE THEME OF MARITAL DISHARMONY IN 'THE SERPENT AND THE ROPE' AND 'THE GUIDE'

— Dr. K. Meera Bai

Indian writing in English is the product of the tradition - loving East coming into contact with the modernised West. It is quite natural that Indian writers writing in English should choose to deal with the theme of East-West encounter in the context of human relationships. Husband-wife relationship being the most intimate as well as 'the most complex of all relationships, the conflict between tradition and modernity finds itself projected in the context of marriage.

Indian women's concept of traditional values and marital relationship is different from that of the western woman. Longing for self-fulfillment and self-expression are western concepts. Modern Indian woman who belongs to the transition period from tradition to modernity imbibes the western ideas and seeks to strive towards individual happiness even at the cost of marital harmony. Husband-wife alienation and the consequent break-up seems to be inevitable when these women fail to build-up a relationship based on companionship, communication and equality. If the marriage is between two sharply contrasted individuals - one steeped in Indian tradition and the other a representative of European culture - such marriage naturally is charged with potential for marital discord and husband-wife estrangement. Writers

like Kamala Markandaya (*Possession*), Nayantara Sahgal (*Rich Like us*), Anita Desai (*Bye, Bye Black bird*) and Ruth Praver Jhabvala (*Esmond in India*) have dealt with this aspect and depicted the conflicts and frustrations with insight and understanding.

Even if the marriage is between two persons with the same cultural and traditional background, difference in temperaments and attitudes might lead to alienation and estrangement. The trait of individuation, especially in women, might lead to clash of personalities and breaking up of the age-old institution of marriage. For example Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow*, Kamala Markandaya's *Coffer Dams*, Ruth Praver Jhabvala's *Get Ready For Battle* and Raji Narasimhan's *For ever Free* deal with the attitudinal differences leading to clash of personalities and final disintegration of marriage.

It makes an interesting exercise to attempt a comparative study of the themes of husband-wife alienation and the resulting marital discord as it is dealt with in Raja Rao's *The Serpent And the Rope* and R. K. Narayan's *The Guide*.

Raja Rao, himself a product of two cultures of the East and the West, explores the theme of marital discord in



the context of marriage between an Indian Brahmin and a French lady in *The Serpent And The Rope*. Their marriage is charged with potential for marital discord because of the cultural disparities and sharply contrasted traditional values. R. K. Narayan chooses to deal with the theme of estrangement between husband and wife in the context of temperamental incompatibility and attitudinal difference.

The symbolism suggested at the level of the Title in Raja Rao's *The Serpent And The Rope* is extended to the relationship between Rama Swamy and Madeleine too. The difference between expectation and reality proves too much for the two highly intellectual individuals. When the hoped for marital harmony and happiness appear to be an illusion, their separation becomes inevitable. One can observe that Marco and Rosie in R.K.Narayan's *The Guide* get estranged because of temperamental incompatibility where as Rama Swamy and Madeleine in Raja Rao's *The Serpent And The Rope* withdraw from each other because of cultural disparity. Raja Rao's novel studies the disillusionment of Rama Swamy and his final perception of nonduality of existence through Sankara's Advaita Philosophy. R.K.Narayan's novel traces the progress of Raju from tourist guide to spiritual guide.

The alienation between Rama Swamy and Madeleine and Marco and Rosie seems to be the result of unequal equation between the couples. Madeleine is highly individualistic and is confined

to her self - endorsed world of intellectualism. Her inability to get involved in Rama Swamy's sense of values leads to the estrangement between them. In spite of her professed love for India she 'cannot achieve consonance with the Indian spirit all the way'. Rama Swamy's concept of marriage is entirely different from that of Madeleine. For him marriage is not something concerned with only two individuals. The bond should be strengthened by family traditions and spiritual and cultural ethos. As M.K.Naik observed "what destroys the marriage is not 'incompatibilite de temperaments' but un-bridgeable gulf between two cultural ethos<sup>2</sup>".

Rama Swamy thought that their marriage would bring the best of the European culture into contact with the best of Indian culture. But his trip to India first when his father was ill and later, on the occasion of his sister's marriage makes him realize that the cultural gulf between them is unbridgeable. His home-coming brings out the latent longing for Indian culture. The sad realization that she cannot share his sense of values makes him withdraw from her. His hopes that Madeleine would be a 'Maitreyi' for him in whom he could seek his ownself are shattered. He observes that Madeleine had never participated in "my superstition though I had in hers". Sexual attraction fails to provide the required sustenance to strengthen the bond.

Rosie-Marco relationship in R.K.Narayan's *The Guide* is strained



## THE THEME OF MARITAL DISHARMONY IN 'THE SERPENT AND THE ROPE' AND 'THE GUIDE'

25

because they live on different planes. Rosie is devoted to the art of dancing while Marco looks at it as mere street acrobatics. He is obsessed with his archaeological surveys and studies. He is stern, self-centred and self-righteous. Rosie's longing for sharing of ideas and ambitions is dismissed by Marco as a foolish woman's sentiments. He is more interested in the carvings on the walls, stone figures and caves but neglects the throbbing, pulsating heart of his wife. Marco's passion is to be correct in everything - be it in paying the bills for which he would not forget demanding vouchers even at the crucial moment of his discovery of Rosie's infidelity or in acknowledging the debt to Raju for the help rendered in bringing out the book. Raju wonders how Marco could be uninterested in a woman like Rosie. He observes "dead and decaying things seem to un-loosen his tongue and fire his imagination rather than things that lived and moved and swung their limbs".

He could not understand her. If Rosie yields to Raju, it is not just to satisfy her physical passion. She feels suffocated in her life with Marco. The longing for companionship and communication brings her close to Raju. She is starved of affection and yearns for recognition and acknowledgement of her artistic talent. Her first obsession is dancing. Raju wins her by appreciating her art, by praising her talent and by encouraging her.

In spite of Marco's indifference and cold behaviour Rosie tries to be a dutiful wife. She becomes all the more solicitous towards her husband after her new intimacy with Raju. That she is

pricked by guilty conscience is evident in her frequent mention of her duty to her husband. Rosie is not a woman given to deception and cheating. With the least effort, Marco could extract the whole truth from her. Like a truant child confessing its mistake, she confesses her guilts and begs his pardon. She never thinks of leaving Marco but "followed him day after day like a dog waiting on his grace" At the cost of her pride and self-respect she tries to make amends for her folly.

Rama Swamy and Madeleine fall apart because they get enmeshed in their own intellectual rigmaroles and philosophical argument and lose touch with the outer reality and with each other. Their separation results from their irreconcilable egos. Madeleine is a typical Westerner with her intellectual exclusiveness, individualism and determinism of culture. For Rama Swamy, life is a pilgrimage and a quest for self-realization. He does not believe in death and says "I do not believe death is". He accepts Pierre's as well as the second child's death as a part of the whole scheme. Madeleine is unable to come out of this personal tragedy. She withdraws into her own world where Rama Swamy has no entry. Rama Swamy feels that what Madeleine cares for is a disinterested devotion to any cause and she loved him partly because she felt India had been wronged by the British and because by marrying him she would know and identify herself with great people. The irony is that though she believes that all good things come to her from India, it is India which separates her from Rama Swamy. She asks in bewilderment.



"What is it that separated us Rama?"

"India"

"India? But I am a Buddhist"

"That is why Buddhism left India"

"But one can become a Buddhist?"

"Yes, and a Christian and a Muslim as well."

"Then ?"

"One can never be converted to Hinduism."

It is this belief of Ramaswamy that stands as an iron curtain between them. He fails to see that Madeleine has turned to Buddhism hoping that with its compassion and pity it would provide her solace and refuge.

Rosie, who hails from a family devoted to dancing is a misfit in the world of Marco. She is pulled by opposite forces of loyalty and duty to her husband on one side and the much longed-for companionship and encouragement she gets from Raju on the other side. This psychological conflict continues till the end. She reflects "I may be mistaken in my own judgement of him - After all he had been kind to me". Her all-consuming passion compels her to find an outlet and Raju conveniently uses it for his own benefit by acting as connoisseur of art.

One may find Raju's portrayal of Marco as different from Rosie's assessment of him. Raju looks at him as a hard-hearted boor. But Rosie never makes such pronouncements against her husband. Her disappointment with her

husband gets reflected only through her indirect comments. When Raju asks her what is it that interests her, she answers "anything except cold, old stone walls". This statement amply underscores the polarity of their ideas and aspirations. Even when she shows interest in his work and says that she would bring out an innovative place of dance with the help of his findings, she is snubbed at and dismissed contemptuously. Her observation "I'd have preferred any kind of mother-in-law if it had meant one real, loving husband", explains the gulf between them. Though R.K.Narayan does not probe deep into the psychological turmoil of Rosie, he succeeds in presenting her dilemma in all intensity.

Marco is not portrayed as the villain of the novel. Even Raju, who dislikes him for obvious reasons at times speaks good of him : "he was a good man completely preoccupied, probably a man with an abnormal capacity for trust." Rosie's observation confirms Raju's observation of him. Rosie wonders "what husband in the world would let his wife go and live in a hotel room by herself a hundred miles away". Ironically these are the two factors - his pre-occupation and his capacity for trust that have contributed to the separation between Marco and Rosie. What leads to the estrangement between the husband and wife is the polarity of attitudes towards life.

For Marco, life is nothing but a serious intellectual pursuit. He fails to perceive Rosie's passionate attachment to the art of dancing. He is totally prosaic in his approach to life. Like Raman in



## THE THEME OF MARITAL DISHARMONY IN 'THE SERPENT AND THE ROPE' AND 'THE GUIDE'

27

Anita Dasai's *Where shall we go this Summer* he is practical to the core. His appreciation of the butler Joseph shows his attitude to life. He says that, "Joseph is a wonderful man, I don't see him, I don't hear him but he does everything for me at right time. That's how I want things to be, you know". This attitude of Marco has a stifling effect on Rosie. It is at this time, chance brings her the companionship of Raju. Raju "comes to symbolize for her the warm flow of life that ministered to the vital human needs which had been starved."

In course of time she comes to see Raju in his true colours. As Raju becomes more and more obsessed with money and the power that money brings, she begins to be less and less interested in him, and even in giving dance performances for the sake of money. Time and again her thoughts go back to her husband. As C.D. Narasimhaiah observes "the refrain 'after all he is my husband' runs through her mind during all the years of her separation from him. It is true that Raju "stifles Rosie more callously than Marco had. If Marco's attempt to send her jewels back to her is in keeping with his nature, so is Rosie's guilty feeling with her nature. The same honesty and sincerity which make her think of her folly again and again also prompt her to do her best to free Raju from the forgery case against him.

Madeleine and Rama Swamy are more complex characters in the sense that their personal dilemmas lead them to existential predicament where they begin to question the very meaning of life. They are self-alienated beings, cut off from their traditional moorings. Both Ramaswamy and Madeleine get bogged

down in their own pursuit of the metaphysical reality. The tragedy is that the reality is coloured by their subjective view point. Madeleine's fascination for India does not last long because she comes in touch with it only tangentially and never tries to get at the core of it. Rama Swamy is alienated from her due to his feeling that she is not the woman of his life.

In her search for identity Madeleine drifts aimlessly from one meaningless abstraction to another only to embrace Buddhism, and renounces her ties with her husband. Rama Swamy is conscious of his ego and realizes marriage cannot be a true bond until the ego is dead. He knows that Madeleine has a horror for crossing bridges and hence the bridge would never be crossed. She knows him at the intellectual level but fails to gain entry into his deeper self. Madeleine is sore that he is more interested in the sonship of his son than in his being her son and ascribes it to the Indian habit of treating the feminine as an accessory. She declares "You will never understand us the French".

Madeleine would be ready to be tortured and be his slave but what Rama Swamy looks for in a wife is not a slave but a companion of pilgrimage which she never can be. He feels that maternity has given Madelaine an otherness which makes her secretive, whole and incommunicable. He finds the woman of his life in Savitri. Madeleine seeks to alleviate her disappointment by torturing her body through self-imposed discipline of Buddhism. While she attempts to submerge her ego in Buddhism, Rama Swamy realizes that a



"Guru' alone can solve for him the riddle of the serpent and the rope - illusion and reality.

One can see Indian ethos at work in the portrayal of the characters. In the portrayal of Rosie, R.K. Narayan takes care to show that Rosie's spirit is not tainted inspite of her infidelity to her husband. Rama Swamy's metaphysical quest for the ultimate truth is akin to Indian ethos. He seeks to escape the cycle of birth and death through self-realization and knowledge of the Absolute.

It may be observed that the entire novel is presented from Rama Swamy's point of view. The autobiographical tone goes well with the subjective vision, of the world around and Rama Swamy's relations with others are perceived from his own personal and at times highly defensive, point of view. The readers come to know of Rama Swamy's dilemma and disillusionment as the slow process of the disintegration of the marriage process to culminate in separation. They get only a faint glimpse of Madeleine's fears and frustrations, ideals and anguish. What they finally come to know of Madeleine is filtered through the consciousness of Rama Swamy. One wonders what it would have been had Madeleine been given a chance to narrate the story in the first person and her ownself, as the central consciousness. Even as matters stand, one gets puzzled over Rama Swamy's relationship with women, which is guided by his very personal concept of the feminine principle. Uma Parameswaran attributes the failure of their marriage to Rama Swamy's inability to interact and says "Rama lives within his illusory realm, a snake

- charmer, piping tunes to serpents that dance as and when he wills them to. Madeleine is the only rope, the only reality that comes into his insular world "because of her intellectualism, her individuality and her religious determinism. He too seems to have failed her with his refusal to step out of his self-endorsed subjective view - point regarding the role of a woman in man's life which leads to the final separation.

In the case of Marco - Rosie relationship too, one gets a feeling that Marco is not given fair treatment. It is either through the eyes of Rosie or Raju the reader views and understands Marco. His creator did not give him an identity. It is Raju who nick names him Marcopolo. It is true Marco fails to live upto Rosie's expectation and desires. But one wonders why Rosie should complain after having walked into marriage with her eyes open.

Both Raja Rao's Rama Swamy and R.K. Narayan's Rosie seem to enjoy the patronizing attitude of their creators while Madeleine and Marco do not. In both the novels the theme of husband-wife alienation serves the artistic purpose of sustaining the interest of the reader by providing human interest.

## REFERENCES

1. K.R. Rao, *The Fiction or Raja Rao* (Aurangabad: Perimel Prakashan, 1980) P. 73.
2. M.K. Naik, *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English* (New Delhi: Macmillan, 1977) P. 273.
3. C.D. Narasimhaiah, R.K. Narayan's *The Guide* "in *Aspects of Indian Writing in English*, ed M.K. Naik, (New Delhi, Macmillan, 1979), P. 185.



# THE ROMANCE OF ADVERTISEMENTS

— Vemaraju Narasimha Rao

*"There was our man, Phadnis,  
One of the mother's Laddies-  
He always relished the  
Chutnies  
And, alas, left out his Idlies!"*

I have always enjoyed reading the advertisements. Not that I relish the News less. Only, I get kick from the ads more.

Fortunately for us, the newspapers have already classified their ads. Mine, however, is functional.

## ENTICING THE GULLIBLE

The ads that attract your attention most are the ones that are meant for the gullible. You are promised with a Kashmiri shawl or an attractive imported alarm clock if you place an order for only three pieces of an enchanting perfume- offered only with a view to popularising it. If you take six pieces, packing and forwarding are, of course, free. A magic ring that solves all your problems of love, marriage, examinations, promotion and a host of other things is all yours just for a throwaway price of Rs.25. But if you are interested in an extra special and fortified one, it may cost you about Rs.50. Which is still a bargain, considering what it offers! You may contact a Box Number of a certain North Indian Town.

But do not be sceptical. There are many who tested and testified to its efficacy.

A transistorised two-band radio is all yours if you happen to enter a simple contest. You are supplied with a square with 16 smaller squares within and all you have to do is to insert 16 figures in each small square so that the total of all numbers in a line, whether vertical or horizontal or diagonal, is the same. For practice purposes, you are also given a square already filled in. All you have to do is to add just one to each numeral and the diagram is filled. You have to mail it to a Box Number (again, yes, in North India - you guessed right) and if you happen to be lucky you will get a radio receiver or a watch for half the price, by VPP from the Postman. Even if the damned contraption does not make a single sound what about the thrill of having won a prize?

Why, you could even get loans on personal security upto any amount, if you contact a certain financing firm, who after collecting their fees for registration etc., direct you to another regarding surety. There is no knowing how many firms you have to contact before the promised loan materialises.

## SEX GALORE

Then there are those which appeal to you instantly, such as the rare



albums and books on art and sex meant for being viewed only in privacy or in some appropriate company. You could, for example, get 64 real life photoes (printed on costly art paper) of the most beautiful girls of the world, for a paltry sum of Rs.60 only.

Cine advertisements are a class by themselves. These ads are very attractive with lovely girls in daring, baring and provocative poses, with all their vital statistics supplied before hand for the avid readers and film fans. Producers make good use of these stills to sell their wares much in advance of the release of the films. More often than not, you will be disappointed to miss some of these salacious scenes, which become victims of the merciless operation at the hands of the fun-killing Censors. This incidentally proves that the Censor Boards are the sworn enemies of the shapely little things!

We are reminded of a certain avid film buff who is credited with having attended all the shows of a particular film showing the heroine undressing herself, when a train rushes past and obstructs further view, only to be highly disappointed to find that the blasted train always ran on time and was never late!

Nowadays you will not come across many advertisements which do not display a female form promoting some article of consumption or trade. The KS ads with a lovely and loving couple for the condoms, project the beauty of the human form and the necessity of the prophylactic, in these

hard days of population explosion. Recently, there has been much controversy, regarding the Milind and MadhuSapre advertisement with their tangled and nude bodies advertising TUFF shoes. The suggestion of the ad and the product are miles apart and naturally there is a hue and cry to stop such irrelevant and degrading(?) ads.

### AD BLITZ

Then there are those which tempt you into buying things you don't really require and make you miserable if you can't afford. The full page fully illustrated ads make you wish you had gone in right away (if you have the where withal) for the most useful and glamorous things on earth such as fridges, washing and sewing machines, fans, air conditioners etc., not to mention the temptation of flying by a certain airlines, because, you are told, its airhostesses are charming and goodlooking, its cuisine excellent and its condition 'tops'. You are invited to smoke a particular brand of cigarettes, for how can you know that your brand is the best, until you have smoked the other brands? You will however find in microscopically fine print dutifully printed as required by the Statute, that "Cigarette smoking is injurious to health".

Then there are the rather lengthy advertisements of the Companies which give you all the particulars but warn you that these were not meant to be prospectuses. There are also the marathon speeches of the Company executives, which you would mistake



## THE ROMANCE OF ADVERTISEMENTS

31

for press coverage, but are in fact advertisements fully paid for.

It is always a wonder that chit tender notices should be so numerous. These ought to be, considering the number of PWD men and the contractors on the job. Incidentally, does this not prove that ours is a highly developing country?

## ANGLING FOR WIFE

Matrimonial advertisements are always a good reading. Men all over the world appear to prefer good looking, smart, educated and wealthy women without encumbrances. But after marriage, something seems to go terribly wrong, giving scope to such crude jokes as the one for example, when a gentleman advertised, "Wanted Wife", there were numerous replies, "You can have mine".

## SOMEONE MISSING

"Lost" series make pathetic reading. These implore the truant boy to return home immediately, all his faults forgiven. He would be given the

required pocket money and he could, of course, marry the girl of his choice. All this because the poor mother is pining and is bedridden- You are promised a very handsome reward of Rs500 if you could inform the whereabouts of a boy who left the house a week ago in a white shirt and shorts, clean shaven. The chances of your getting the reward are remote, as he would have changed the dress or grown a beard.

## READERS TAKE ALL

A wit said sometime back that you are made pay for the cost of the advertisement (the Company passes on the bill to consumer ultimately); the cost of printing (Newspapers charge for inserting the advertisements); and finally for reading it too (you will have to shell down some money for buying the paper, won't you?)!

Let those, who seek to bother themselves with what is happening elsewhere on the globe, bemoan that these days, the space taken by the advertisements in the papers, is far more than that left for the news. But, for me, it is alright. What do I care?

*"Day and night, dusk and dawn  
Winter and Spring come repeatedly,  
Time plays games, life is fleeting  
Yet, one does not leave the winds of desire....."*

— SANKARACHARYA



## A Poem

# REAL STRENGTH

— Dr. C. JACOB

The angel in me wakes me up every morn  
And bids me write a line for the forlorn,  
That may console a soul in distress lay,  
And kindles hope to live for one more day.

Great men are strong not by the food they eat,  
But by relentless fight against fate;  
Hence he bids me tell men now and again,  
The strength of mind at times excels a mountain.

---

# A VISUAL MELODY

— Dr. Sanjiva Dev

The grey shadows at the floating clouds crawl, in rhythm and tune, across the achre rocks like the rushing waves over the golden sands creating a visual melody. The rocks are static, the waves kinetic moving from rock to rock. This static - kinetic view has created the impression of the harmony of sound and silence! It is more a fleeting phenomenon that would vanish into the void along with the complete disappearance of the evanescent sun in the West. After the disappearance of the sun's glow would appear the nocturnal gloom rendering the shadows invisible. I attempted to perpetuate fleeting spectacle on paper in line and tone but failed to do so; it did only remain an unexecuted picture, bereft of line and tone. upon the empty surface of my sensitive psyche. It is a psychical expression of a physical impressioon; an intangible nounmenon of a tangible phenomenon!!



# THE PARADOX OF THE FULLY AWAKENED CONDITION

— Andrew Cohen

## Subtlety in discrimination vs. Feeling and Experience

Most people have great difficulty making subtle distinctions. And in the realm of spiritual experiences and spiritual feelings, in the realm of meditation, reflection and contemplation, the ability to make subtle distinctions is most important. If one yearns to see with penetrating clarity, this is the arena to venture into. Why is this? Because most people tend to approach the possibility of spiritual emancipation in a very clumsy and gross-minded way. In the name of Enlightenment, many are only seeking for a condition that could be seen as not much different than a narcotic stupor. Instead of seeking for that realization that awakens the intelligence, most instead seek for a spiritual feeling that, like a narcotic, will hopefully relieve them of the burden of existence.

When one ventures beyond the surface of spiritual experience, one who is truly earnest soon discovers that the meaning and significance of Enlightenment is not the experience of intense feelings, but rather the recognition of the ability to perceive the subtlest of subtle distinctions. The perception of this subtlety demands the awakening of intelligence and a humility that is profound.

## No Position

Anyone who is truly serious about awakening sooner or later must begin to look into what subtlety of perception and understanding might mean in the actuality of their own life. That means; with what degree of subtlety is one perceiving the actuality of one's own life? With what degree of subtlety is one perceiving the entirety of one's existence - from the personal all the way to the absolute and beyond?

The way to pursue the matter of subtlety of perception and also the accuracy of perception is to investigate deeply and with intensity the question; What position am I taking?

In order to see clearly, with sensitivity and real objectivity, it is imperative that one finds a way to take absolutely no position in relationship to thought, feeling and experience. It is a very difficult thing to do. In spite of that, it must be done; and indeed, the discovery of the ability to take no position in relationship to thought, feeling and experience is the very ground of the Enlightened perspective.

The ability to take no position in relationship to thought, feeling and experience is the mystery and the key that unlocks the door of awakened



knowledge, and it is imperative that one somehow or other find that key. Otherwise, it will be difficult even to begin to perceive real depth, and therefore impossible to recognize subtle distinctions.

One needs to let everything fall into place *as it is* in order to be able to see it as it is. If one would take a position in relationship to thought, feeling and experience, then how could one possibly see any of it clearly?

### What Position Are You Taking?

On the other hand, one finds that as part and parcel of the human condition, whether one is profoundly ignorant or fully awakened, it is *impossible to take absolutely no position in relationship to thought, feeling and experience*. Why? because as long as one is living and breathing, one must act. One has no choice. Even if one would choose to do and say absolutely nothing, one would still be making a choice, and therefore, acting. And as long as one is acting, one will be expressing a position. It is impossible to be alive and not take a position. Therefore, the question is this: What position are you taking?

### Non-duality

What is the meaning and significance of non-duality in the face of the inherent paradox of, on one hand, the need to take no position in order to be able to see clearly, and on the other, the inherent impossibility of taking no position simply in the fact of being alive? The meaning and significance of non-duality in the face of this inherent

paradox is this: *there is no escape from actuality*. There is no spiritual experience, feeling or insight that can free us from the burden of actuality, the burden of life *as it truly is*. Therefore, it is the secret of no position alone that can reveal that position that itself is a perfect reflection of the Real. There is no other way. The meaning and significance of non-duality in the face of this inherent paradox is ultimately the complete destruction of the paradox itself. When the secret of no position has been discovered inwardly, and then is simultaneously reflected outwardly as that action that most perfectly expresses true integrity of realization and action, then and only then has the paradox truly been destroyed. Only then has the destruction of the distinction between inner and outer truly occurred. ultimately, the fullest realization of no position becomes the most profound expression of that position that is truly undivided.

### Addendum

Why is this so important? I have found that far too many people these days believe that they are taking no position, when in fact if only they would truly scrutinize themselves and look more closely, they would discover all too quickly that of course they're taking many positions. How many people in the name of spiritual enlightenment claim no position as a hiding place from the burden of discrimination that real life demands?

One has to somehow find a way through contemplation and meditation to take no position in order to be able to



# THE VEDANTA OF YOGI VEMANA

(Based on C.P. Brown's Translations in English Prose)

— A. Satyavathi

1

To the poets of Siva,  
to the nine poets,  
to the creed of Siva,  
to the wisdom divine,  
to the boon granting gem  
to those foremost  
in the world of Siva,  
To Siva Himself  
and the Guru,  
pray for aid, O, Vema !

2

The Unborn One,  
the Slayer of Sharabha,

the One of the nature of Siva  
and the Lord of a  
thousand million of demigods,  
the servant of Siva  
seated at the root  
of the Banyan tree,  
the one full of bliss of Siva,  
He, Somasekhara, is my Guru.

3

The one who learns these poems  
uttered by Vema,  
will attain to that state  
which the mind cannot  
comprehend.

---

*(Continued from the previous page)*

perceive the Real, and at the same time one has to be able to find a way to act, respond and react spontaneously and without hesitation to a perfect and clear reflection of the real. This is always very delicate and unbearably subtle. Most people prefer to err on one side or the other. It's much easier. It's less demanding. Either one will be taking such a strong position that it would make true objectivity an impossibility or else one would end up assuming false conclusions about one's ability to truly take no position. Finally, one has to ask oneself: What position am I taking and to what degree am I truly able to take no position in relationship to what I'm perceiving? This kind of meditation must be sustained. It's not something that

can be done just once and then left. The natural inclination of most people is to want to rest. And when one rests, the next thing that might happen is one may get drowsy, and from there one may end up falling asleep once again. This is what happens most of the time when people for some reason or other stumble upon awakening. Just as easily as one can stumble upon awakening, one can stumble right back into bed.

[Reprinted from *What is Enlightenment?* a biannual journal publication of Moksha Foundation; Volume 2, Number 1, January 1993; courtesy Moksha Foundation, P.O.Box 5265, Larkspur, CA 94977, USA.]



# SPIRITUALISM VS. MATERIALISM IN BHABANI BHATTA CHARYA'S "A DREAM IN HAWAII"

— K. Yadagiri

*A Dream in Hawaii*\* (1975), the last novel of Bhattacharya, aims at revision of Western culture and society by eastern philosophy. While Bhattacharya's earlier novels deal with native issues specially dominated by theme of hunger for food and social upliftment, *A Dream in Hawaii* deals with hunger for human dignity and self-release. During his stay in America, Bhattacharya was a witness to the sickness of the society neck-deep in immorality, materialism and sensual pleasures. The modern man is struggling to liberate himself from this malady. Indian society is also suffering from the same evils though not as much as the American. Bhattacharya seems to point out that neither strict asceticism nor rank materialism will deliver the goods. Yogananda fails to suppress his physical instincts after years of asceticism and comes back to India at the end of the novel with a sense of failure. Whereas Gregson, representing western materialism, too realises the futility of his way of life. Each has to learn from the other. In the article "What is in a dream," Sarma and Rangan conclude that :

*A Dream in Hawaii* is a novel with many facets and layers of meaning. On the surface there is the East-West encounter; at a deeper level it is an analysis of culture. Particularly of America, from a specific Indian point of view; it is also a dissertation on the sickness of modern society, both eastern and western. At the same time it presents man's search for the self, or alternately, his endeavour to discard the masks. It is possibly much more.<sup>1</sup>

Jasbir Jain considers that the theme of the novel is in many ways "a continuation of the theme of *Shadow from Ladakh*" She says; "On the surface it appears to be a novel about two cultural traditions, but in reality it is about the conflicting needs of man. Neeloy Mookerji is unable to submerge his identity completely into that of Swami Yogananda; and just as Satyajit realises he is not a Gandhi, Neeloy too realises that he is not a Swami"<sup>2</sup>. Bhattacharya makes a dig at the hypocritical and fake saints. At the same time he suggests ethical and spiritual means to solve the crisis in the American society, symbol of Westernism, through Eastern spiritual thought and philosophy.

---

\* Bhabani Bhattacharya, *A Dream in Hawaii* (Delhi : Orient Paperbacks, A division of Vision Books Pvt. Ltd., 1983). All subsequent references with page numbers in parentheses are to this edition.



## SPIRITUALISM VS. MATERIALISM IN BHABANI BHATTA CHARYA'S "A DREAM IN HAWAII"

37

*A Dream in Hawaii* mainly deals with the quest for fullness of life and human identity. The novel vividly projects the problems of American sick society, greed for power, wealth and obsession with sex. Sexual permissiveness of the West represented by Gregson is juxtaposed by the self-denial and suppression of sexual instinct by Swami Yogananda. Both, however, fail to achieve human happiness. As Goyal comments "almost half of the chapters are concerned with the depiction of the surfeit of sex as a symptom of the sick society, while the other half explore the true nature of spiritualism and salvation, which, the author believes, are not reached through self-denial but only through self-fulfilment."<sup>3</sup> Bhattacharya suggests a humanistic approach to these problems. He always asserts life of fullfilment rather than self-denial which in its extreme form tends to be inhuman and anti-life. Bhattacharya is concerned with ethical questions rather than the cosmological as pointed out by Crawford:

In his religio-moral stance he is not so concerned with cosmological questions, what is the world made of? but with ethical questions, What are we to do with our lives in the world?.... In addition to social concerns, Bhattacharya thinks that the strong ascetical bias in the Indian religious tradition is anti-life and is the bane of the nation. Sacrifice, self-control, simplicity are all beautiful ideals which have come down from the past and have been sanctioned by great souls such as

Gandhi. But there is a certain point at which these virtues become vices. When they rob us and those closest to us (especially wives and daughters) of experiencing life in all its joyous fullness. Such unbalanced values stop short of masochism and escapism. To be sure, the myriad forms of self-abnegation are carried out in the name of *moksa*, but "deliverance was never the reward of an escapist"<sup>4</sup>.

Bhattacharya also condemns the strict ascetism of Satyajit in *Shadow from Ladakh*.

The novel deals with two kinds of people. Neeloy mukherji who turns into Swami Yogananda, and Stella Gregson do not accept sex as part of human life for happiness. They seek fulfilment of life on purely spiritual means and represent Eastern spiritualism. Walt Gregson, Jennifer, Mamoni, Frieda, Sylviakoo and Dr. Vincent Swift seek happiness and satisfaction through sex alone without any inhibitions, going down to the level of sheer animality, and represent western materialism. Both kinds of people fail to achieve meaning in their life by their own philosophies. All the characters in the novel seem to be searching for those "basic human values which could serve as objective correlatives of this human identity"<sup>5</sup>.

The story of the novel runs like this: Professor Neeloy Mukherji teaches Indian philosophy at Varanasi University. He is a specialist in "projecting the ancient Vedanta into our



modern experience"(82). With spiritual zeal, he turns into Swami Yogananda, and becomes popular in India. An American lady Stella Gregson becomes his disciple and takes him to Hawaii to help the sick American society through him. There Yogananda confronts Walt Gregson steeped in western materialistic philosophy. Yogananda helps the people of America to overcome their sexual obsession through the spiritual philosophy. But his own failure to get rid of sexual feelings brings remorse to Yogananda, and he returns to India. Through the story Bhattacharya suggests a life of fulfilment which responds to the human needs - both physical and spiritual.

Dr. Neeloy Mukherji is influenced by Swamy Vivekananda. He knows that Swami Vivekananda's mission is to build human understanding rather than disseminating knowledge. He used to invite monks from nearest Vivekananda's ashram to impart extra knowledge to his students. Once a Yogi points out that "There is a Yogi deep within Neeloy"(84). But Mukherjee is sceptical about it. He still looks at his student Devjani with lust. She notices it.

Devjani, however, does not respond to his attentions. She wants to escape from the reality of sex and fill the void with spiritual life. She becomes a student of Dr. Neeloy Mukherjee. After hearing lectures on Swami Vivekananda she comes to know that there is a deep longing in her for spiritual life.

The colleagues and students of

Neeloy Mukherjee hail him for his fund of knowledge and see him as Philosophy incarnate. Some of his students seek guidance and direction from him for their lives. They see a guru in him and compel him to renounce the world and become a Yogi, saying that "*A star cannot be a firefly!*" (89). Although Mukherjee knows that he is only a firefly and cannot become a star, he feels compelled to be a guru. He admits, "Students as well as colleagues have laid down my future course of life. I have no choice left" (89).

Thus Neeloy Mukherjee turns into Swami Yogananda to serve mankind. he goes to the Himalayas, and leads ashram life at Rishikesh. He starts new activities for *Sadhana* - humanitarian work which is a part of ashram life. He shows more interest in serving mankind than going abroad like other gurus.

Swami Yogananda becomes popular in India.

The meeting between Stella Gregson, an American lady, and Swamy Yogananda marks a turning point in their lives. Sick of sexual permissiveness of American society, Stella deserts her husband and visits Rishikesh to become a disciple of Swamy Yogananda. She represents suppressed morality and dignity of mankind in American society.

Her meeting with Yogananda changes her life and attitude.

She sees in Yogananda a saviour "who will lead today's Americans from darkness into light" (15). So she takes him to the East-West cultural centre at Hawaii to utilise his services for the



## SPIRITUALISM VS. MATERIALISM IN BHABANI BHATTA CHARYA'S "A DREAM IN HAWAII"

39

distracted American youth.

Ironically enough, Yogananda is still torn in conflict. When Devjani comes from Harvard to receive *dikhsa* from him, he suppresses his feeling for her with great difficulty. He is aware of his limitations to be a perfect Yogi.

Yet Yogananda's mission at Kennedy theatre goes successfully. He is able to offer peace and consolation to Jennifer, a friend of Stella, who was sick of her disolute past.

Yogananda understands that Americans believe in free love, and chastity has no meaning as far as physical life is concerned in the West. Henry and Frieda, a couple from Los Angeles, come on vacation to Hawaii and meet Yogananda. Frieda tells Yogananda about American society.

"The death of worn-out sanctities. Marriage reduced to a convenient contract. For the young and unmarried, dating....."

Frieda had a sexual experience with a guru at Los Angeles. On the advice of her husband, Frieda tries to tempt Swami Yogananda too in his room. But Yogananda does not yeild to her.

Dr. Vincent Swift, President of Hawaii Academy patronises Yogananda's mission with a view to exploiting it for his selfish interests. He is materialistic and feels that he is next to Swami Yogananda in status. He wants to shape the Yogananda Mission into 'World Centre for Yogic Disciplines'.

In addition to Yoga he wants to open new branches of Astrology,

Exorcism and Religion at the centre. His main concern is to make a big business out of World Centre of Yogic Discipline like other spiritual institutions. He says, "I don't have to tell you, Jen, that Big Business with its profit orientation can be honest, decent, serving vital human needs". (112).

Dr. Swift's idea in making three-fourths of World Centre for Yogic disciplines into commerce has become a reality. The institute soon grows popular because of Swami Yogananda's philosophy of 'self-denial'. Lot of gifts pour in from the young. "The young donors did not make their gifts out of abundance. Their gesture meant self-denial. It meant an urge to see the World Centre founded"(182). However Yogananda does not approve of Dr. Swift's scheme of ambitious expansion. He decides to quit the centre leaving a note behind.

Swami Yogananda wants to heal the sick American society and restore human dignity through spiritual means with rational attitude. He firmly decides to liberate the Americans from Walt's philosophy of liberated woman which lowered the human values in society. Yogananda feels, he has to face Frieda and Walt who "built a challenge for him to face; they were the confrontation for which the World Centre was truly needed"(117). The liberated woman has opted for a new tyranny to replace the old and discarded.

Students of Walt are attracted by Yogananda's messages. The American youth turn to Vedantic philosophy of Yogananda.



Walt criticises that Yogananda's mission has one purpose, that is: To put back the clock of social advance here in America. To delete the revolutionary content in youth's attitude in the most vital area of behaviour.

The crisis, according to Walt is beyond the 'limited range of experience' of an Eastern saint. But the American youth on the other hand realise that "We have been rotten with what's called permissive. It has the same meaning as primitive. Back to the stone age" (125). They find their purpose, belief and hope in the message of Yogananda. Walt's philosophy of permissiveness has been shattered. He decides to take revenge on Swami Yogananda by exposing him as a fake saint as he suspects that Yogananda is attracted to Devjani. He sends Sylvia Koo, in the sari of Devjani to Yogananda's room to awaken in him the suppressed feelings for Devjani. Waking up from his dream, Yogananda is shocked to find Sylvia Koo in his bed room trying to tempt him. He immediately escapes from her. The incident, however, exposes Yogananda's secret longing for Devjani. Later he confesses his dormant love to Devjani, for Yogananda feels that he has failed as a yogi. With regrets, he books a ticket by JAL flight to Calcutta.

Walt Gregson, however, does not gloat over the incident. A sudden feeling of remorse overtakes him.

There is change in the whole attitude of Walt. He has lost his desire for sex. Walt is awakened to a new facet of truth from Yogananda.

Walt admits that the American society including himself needs Yogananda's mission rather than his. He is sorry that Yogananda is leaving for India. He rushes to the airport only to find that Yogananda has already left.

*A Dream in Hawaii* thus suggests that the Eastern philosophy modified by humanism can serve as a panacea to the evils of Western materialism. The Eastern philosophy, however, should make allowance for the natural human impulses without insisting on an ascetic self-denial.

#### NOTES

1. S. Krishna Sarma & V. Rangan "What is in a Dream", *The Literary Endeavour* 1.3 (1979-80) 85-96.
2. Jasbir Jain "The human Dimensions of Stasis and Growth", in *Perspectives on Bhabani Bhattacharya* ed. by Ramesh K. Srivastava (Ghaziabad, Vimal Prakashan, 1982) 63-64.
3. Bhagwat S. Goyal, "The Senses and the Sublime; Bhabani Bhattacharya's *A Dream in Hawaii*", in *Perspectives on Bhabani Bhattacharya* 182.
4. Cromwell Crawford, 'Bhabani Bhattacharya : A Mediating man', in *Perspectives on Bhabani Bhattacharya* 13.
5. Goyal 183.
6. Dorothy Blair Shimer, "Gandhian influences on the writings of Bhabani Bhattacharya", in *Perspectives on Bhabani Bhattacharya* 25.



# PEEP INTO THE OCEAN'S DEPTHS

— M. Sridhar & Alladi Uma

Turn history's pages

Don't be startled or annoyed

In the lines of the world's forehead

many bloody word-garlands

In the box-like heart of the earth

hidden endless tales of murder-offerings

Consigned to ashes by the flames of attachment

countless hearts of even the great

Plots numberless of stately women

disrobed and taken in procession

Final closure of the splendours of past civilizations

indelible marks of human monstrosities

dreadful signs of humans hunting their likes

annihilated - traces - of intellectuals under dictatorships

Let even a ruined sculpture speak

Don't put your head down in shame

Melancholic bridges of tragic songs in wasted lives

The cries of brave warriors sacrificed for rulers' greed

Their old mothers' calamitous moans

Eulogies by poets on pleasure-loving kings

Want to hear more? Don't get lost in darkness

All these are troubles plaguing earth

Want to see more of earth's travails?

Don't get caught, keep at heart

Understand the essence of my lyrics

Unforgettable mental tortures of the self-respecting

At the altar of caste, creed and racist arrogance

the hungry sacrificed

Leaders who plunder under the pretext of protecting the country

Streams of blood drenching the earth

When progress is not chased away by egotism

When service finds its place amidst seats of power

When justice and righteousness are not lost in people

When distinction between the self and the other is destroyed

When slavery of the voiceless disappears

When terrible institutions are cremated

This very world will be a platform for equality

Brutality will not have a place then, humanity will flourish

Divinity will come closer home

Till then slogans of unity will remain mere magical spells

If the vessel is copper, how will it remain untarnished ?

---

*(Translation of Janaswamy Kodandarama Sastry's "Kadaligarbhamloki  
Tongichoodu" from Mahassu by M. Sridhar and Alladi Uma.)*



# ALL ABOUT TYRANNY : A STUDY OF IVY COMPTON-BURNETT'S NOVELS

— Dr. T. Asoka Rani

"Either the father or the mother is usually a tyrant, and the parent who is not a tyrant is usually a weakling or a fool"<sup>1</sup> so observes G. S. Fraser in his textual criticism of the novels of Ivy Compton - Burnett. Even the unmarried aunts, owing to their age and position in the family, and with active support from the parents, tend to exercise oppressive power over the children.

The novelist presents, in succession, powerful tyrants like Sophia Stace (*Brothers and Sisters*). Harriet Haslam (*Men and Wives*). Josephine Napier (*More Women than Men*), Duncan Edgeworth (*A House and its Head*), Sabine Ponsonby and Hetta Ponsonby (*Daughters and Sons*), Matilda Seaton (*A Family and a Fortune*), Anna Donne (*Elders and Betters*) and Horace Lamb (*Menservant and Maidservant*). Except for an aged, worn-out tyrant in *Parents and Children*, this Phenomenon of bloody tyrants is seen in her third novel through to the eleventh. After the total disappearance of tyrants in the next two novels, *Two Worlds and their ways* and *Darkness and Day*, a milder version of tyrants, Aunt Sukey (*Elders and Betters*), Cassius Clare (*The Present and the Past*). Miles Mowbray (*A Father and His Fate*), Simon Challoner (*A Heritage and its History*), Ninian Middleton (*The Mighty and their Fall*) and Hereward Egerton (*A God and His Gifts*) reappear. However, as an

exception, Miranda Hume (*Mother and Son*) rightly belongs to the bunch of malignant tyrants of the earlier novels. In her last novel, (*The last and the First*), a powerful but benevolent tyrant is portrayed in Hermia, for a change in the company of two others of milder type.

The tyrants' domineering grip on the family is depicted in one sentence by Sarkar thus :

In a Compton - Burnett family the tyrant head has displaced God and dictated rules to others forgetting that he has anything or anyone above him to owe allegiance to<sup>2</sup>.

Among the tyrants, women outnumber men; of the powerful ten or so of them, all but two are women and they include the deadliest three, namely Anna Donne, Josephine Napier and Matilda. Elaborating this point, Pamela Hansford Johnson Writes :

Most of her males are eaten by their women. Her villainesses commit crimes of power : her villains, for the most part, crimes of weakness.... The spider analogy might, indeed, be carried further; her men are like insects in the process of being devoured who, seeing that the female has omitted a leg, obligingly turn around and present the remaining limb in order to make the meal easier<sup>3</sup>.

Though these tyrants are



## ALL ABOUT TYRANNY : A STUDY OF IVY COMPTON-BURNETT'S NOVELS

43

generally wicked and malicious, there are among them a few who possess positive qualities and who are inclined to be good. Matilda Seaton is generous to her friend Maria Sloane. She is at times very sensitive, sympathetic and full of understanding. Josephine and Sophia are intelligent. Harriet and Sophia keep their families' interest foremost and work for it even if they have to be ruthless in their dealings. Duncan is considered a veritable God by his family members. Hetta and Sabina appear to be living for others. Horace Lamb becomes a loving and sympathetic father and a model husband. Their positive qualities are recognised even by their victims. That is why the victims are strangely disillusioned when they are suddenly released from the clutches of a tyrant. And when the tyrant dies, all including the harassed feel sad.

The novelist does not agree with those who condemn her tyrants as detestable monsters. She speaks of them as :

They don't seem to me such monsters as they do to other people. I think.... that a good many of us, if subjected to a strong and sudden temptation, without any risk of being found out, would yield to it<sup>4</sup>.

She urges Robert Liddell to stress the goodness of her characters and more particularly that of her tyrants<sup>5</sup>.

In an interview with John Bowen, Ivy Compton-Burnett says, "I think there was a tendency for parents to misuse power.... Nothing's more corrupting than power<sup>6</sup>". After about two years, speaking to Michael Millgate, Ivy Compton-

Burnett says that tyranny does not corrupt people.

I don't think it corrupts people. I think their dislike of it, if anything, would send them the other way.... I've seen people who were tyrannised ones as children being careful not to be tyrants themselves, and people who were indulged too much as children rather tyrannical in their own families. It may be the natural reaction working<sup>7</sup>.

It tends to contradict her own opinion expressed to John Bowen earlier. She seems to think that the persons who grab power or are given power, may be corrupted by that very power and they tend to misuse it. But the others, who are victimised, do not want to retaliate by becoming tyrants. In other words, power corrupts only those who are invested with it and not those victimised by it.

However, it cannot categorically be gainsaid that tyranny breeds tyranny. Traces of tyranny in seed form are discernible in some children like Chilton (*Daughters and Sons*) Nevin (*Parents and Children*), Lavinia (*The Mighty and their Fall*), Verena (*A Father and His Fate*), and Justine (*A Family and a Fortune*). It can further be argued that victims, when they gain power in due course of time, may not like to persecute and wield power over others. One may hope that the formidable parental tyranny will not recur and persist. What is certain is that tyranny distorts and warps innocence and leads to unnatural reactions. The victims are inevitably corroded by the misuse of power. So it has to be conceded that power is corrupting and that her



characters suffer a kind of moral corruption. Even if it is natural, tyrannising is repugnant and therefore condemnable.

Barring cruel and selfish tyrants, possessive tyrants like Sophia, Harriet, Sabine, Miranda and Eliza Heriot are oppressive only because of their love for their families. The nagging Bentley (Pastors and Masters), does not consider himself a tyrant and thinks that what all he does is only for the good of the family.

And now, because I try to keep a wise and firm hand over people for their own good, and to prevent them from sinking down, down, down, for their own sakes - whose, if not for theirs, I should like to know? - to be given as much to bear as if I were a tyrant and a monument of selfishness, instead of.....<sup>8</sup>.

Eliza Heriot thinks that her tyranny is for the benefit of all.... I am a tyrant, because I order the house for the good of us all<sup>9</sup>. Eleanor and Harriet are highly ambitious in their concern for their children and they nag them only out of fear that their hopes may not be realised.

Though Ivy Compton - Burnett sympathises with her tyrants and endows them with some touches of goodness or fineness, readers cannot be blind to their darker side and do not therefore completely exonerate them. Still it is astonishing to see that "the tyrants are never punished; they are feted<sup>10</sup>".

Readers may well look for adequate requital for their misdeeds,

but nothing of the kind does happen. Josephine suffers no legal retribution for her killing of Ruth. Matty is not punished for her ruthless act driving away Miss Griffin. The callous Anna drives Jessica to suicide, marries her son and enjoys her money. Nothing distasteful is visited upon her by way of punishment. This is so because Ivy Compton - Burnett does not believe that evil is punished in this world. She says, ".....I don't think guilty people meet punishment in life<sup>11</sup>". In an interview with her friend, M. Jourdain, she says that misbehaviour may meet with little retribution, some times it will not even be recognised.

'The new statesmen' wanted wickedness to be punished, but my point is that it is not punished, and that is why it is natural to be guilty of it. When it is likely to be punished most of us avoid it<sup>12</sup>.

One of the rare cases of punishment being meted out to the guilty is that of Lady Haslam who is killed by her son, Matthew who in turn commits greater sin than his mother. His own punishment begins with not realising the very object which prompted him to matricide. Verena (*A Father and His Fate*) does not escape punishment for her wickedness. Ridley (*Parents and Children*) cannot achieve his intention of marrying Eleanor. This kind of atonement for evil-doing is, of course, rare to find in her novels.

It is observed in almost all her novels that though tyranny casts its gloomy shadows on the home, it is not triumphant in the end. The tyrants who have reigned supreme like Sophia,



## ALL ABOUT TYRANNY : A STUDY OF IVY COMPTON-BURNETT'S NOVELS

45

Harriet, Sabine, Aunt Sukey, Miranda and Caseius do become weak and ineffective before their death and Hetta even before her marriage. Other tyrant monarchs like Josephine, Matty, Horace, Duncan, Miles, Simon, Hereward and Eliza Heriot, having held for a while a tight grip over their families, progressively become meek and ineffective towards the end. And the unbearable torments of power are no more to be experienced by their victims.

Power and tyranny appear to form a vicious circle in Ivy Compton - Burnett's novels. Power gives rise to tyranny, the tyrants yearn for more and more of power. A vague pattern emerges in her portrayal of these twin evils in her last novel, *The Last and the First* striking a proper balance between them. Power is both used and abused, a perfect balance is struck between self-defence and self-sacrifice. Hermia represents this balance. Power is safe in her hands as she is endowed with intelligence and generosity. Money to her is a source of benign influence over others, and is meant to be used wisely. Following this principle, she succeeds in guiding the family's destiny in the right direction.

If Ivy Compton-Burnett has brought home to us that misuse of tyrannical power, as in her earlier novels, is always detrimental to family interests, she has also created Hermia as her true spokes woman to reveal her mind that power and wealth need not corrupt life if handled with maturity and wisdom.

### REFERENCES :

1. G.S. Fraser, *The Modern Writer and His World* (Penguin, 1967) P. 151.
2. Rabindra Nath Sarkar *Ivy Compton - Burnett : A Trend in English Fiction* (Calcutta : Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., 1979), P. 152.
3. Pamela Hansford Johnson, *Ivy Compton - Burnett* (London : Longmans, Green & Co., 1951) P.23 P. 23.
4. Michael Millgate, 'Interview with Miss Compton - Burnett', *Review of English Literature*, Vol.III, No.4. (October, 1962), P. 106.
5. Quoted from Hilary Spurling, *Secrets of a Woman's Heart*, (London : Penguin, 1984), P. 154.
6. John Bowen "An Interview with Ivy Compton-Burnett", *Twentieth Century Literature*, VI. 25, No.2, (Summer 1979), P. 169.
7. Millgate, P. 110.
8. Ivy Compton-Burnett, (*Pastors and Masters*, (London : Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1965) PP. 84-85.
9. Ivy Compton Burnett, *The Last and the First* (London : Victor Gollancz Ltd.,) P. 32.
10. 'An extra Grudge Against Life', *Review of A God and His Gifts* Time, VI. 83, (Feb. 14, 1964) P.100.
11. Millgate, P. 108.
12. 'Ivy Compton-Burnett and M. Jourdain; A conversation', Charles Burkhart (ed.), *The Art of Ivy Compton-Burnett* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1972) P. 30.



# HERMANN HESSE'S SIDDHARTHA AND THE ANCIENT INDIAN WAY OF LIFE

— Ramesh K. Sree

Siddhartha asserts once again, the ancient Indian way of life, that a man must travel only on the High-way of 'Life' and not search for bylanes, to reach The Eternal, The Brahman. To 'Empty Oneself' one must be 'complete' - that seems to be the essence of the novel 'Siddhartha'. In a quest for truth, there are no short cuts as is shown in the life of the protagonist Siddhartha. He passes through the four ashramas of life, prescribed by Hindu Scriptures; Brahmacharya (Student-ship); Garhastya or Sansara (Household Life) Vanaprastha (retirement to the Forest) and Sanyasa (Fulfilment) and attains what his name means; Siddhartha, One whose aim has been accomplished.

To reach that state he faced many ordeals, tried many experiments, even picked up an argument with the Enlightened soul 'Buddha' and by experience he could quench his quest.

The novel opens with the *First stage of Hindu Life : Brahmacharya*. Siddhartha, darling of pious Brahmin parents, is well versed in all scriptures and rituals.

"He had already long taken part in the learned men's conversations, had engaged in debate with Govinda and had practised the art of contemplation and meditation with him<sup>1</sup>".

But Siddhartha himself is not happy with the knowledge he acquired.

"..... the Brahmins, had already passed on to him the bulk and best of their wisdom, that they had already poured the sum total of their knowledge into his waiting vessel; and the vessel was not full, his intellect was not satisfied, his soul was not at peace, his heart was not still. The ablutions were good, but they were water<sup>2</sup>".

All the rituals seemed, to put them in T.S.Eliot's lines in 'Waste Land'.

".....empty cisterns and exhausted wells<sup>3</sup>". to him.

The futility of rites - Karmakanda, Vedas and Scriptures, for a man who is in serious quest, is well portrayed in Bhagavad Gita.

*Yavan artha udapane  
Sarvatah samplutodake  
tavan saruesu vedusu  
brahmanasya vijanatah*

As is the use of a pond in place flooded with water everywhere, so is that of all the vedas for the Brahmin who understands. (II-119). "Just as one who gets water from the river does not attach importance to a well so the wise do not attach any importance to ritual action". For those of illumed consciousness, ritual observances are of little value. "nate (jnaninah) karma prasamsanti kupam nadyam pibanniva<sup>4</sup>".

Mahabharata : Santiparva, 240, 10.



## HERMANN HESSE'S SIDDHARTHA AND THE ANCIENT INDIAN WAY OF LIFE

47

So leaving aside the scriptures and rites he now wants to find the Eternal and dwell in that consciousness and listen to the never - ending divine music-*akhandā anand dhvani*. But where was it to be found? Nobody showed the way. Nobody knew it. But he must find it. The eternal thirst must be quenched. But how ?

He decides to join the samanas - wandering, solitary, strange and hostile naked ascetics. Abstracting permission from his reluctant parents he joins the samanas with his friend and follower Govinda.

*"Siddhartha had one single goal - to become empty, of thirst, desire, dreams, pleasure and sorrow - to let the self die<sup>5</sup>".*

So with monastic austerity he becomes one with the naked samanas..

"Nails grew long on his thin fingers and a dry gristly beard appeared on his chin. His glance became icy when he encountered women, his lips curled with contempt when he passed through a town of well-dressed people. He saw businessmen trading, princes going to the hunt, mourners weeping over their dead, prostitutes offering themselves, doctors attending the sick, priests deciding the day for vowing, lovers making love, mothers soothing their children - and all were not worth a passing glance, everything lied, stank of lies, they were all illusions of sense, happiness and beauty<sup>6</sup>".

From the samanas, Siddhartha and Govinda learnt to take 'heron into

his soul, to slip into a dead jackal and experienced their cravings for food and sex. He learned many ways of losing self. He killed his senses.

"He lost his self a thousand times and for days on end he dwelt in non-being. But the paths took him away from self, in *the end they always led back to it*<sup>7</sup>".

The bylane he followed proved to be an unending alley. To quote Amiya Bhushan Sharma.

"Siddhartha felt that all his spiritual exercises that he learnt from the samanas gave him only momentary satisfaction, akin to those gained by the wordly people at toddy shops and brothels"<sup>8</sup>.

So Siddhartha decided to leave the path of samanas. Siddhartha and Govinda, in their wanderings, came to know that Gautama Buddha is camping in the Jetavans Grove near the town Savathi. Siddhartha, unlike Govind is not interested in his teachings, but in the very personality of Buddha. At the very first sight he could understand that Buddha is truly a holy man. And never in his life he esteemed a man so much. But Siddhartha could not accept the teachings. He is already fed up with teachings. He wants to experience what Buddha experienced at the time of enlightenment. Buddha's teachings, he believed, will teach, "..... how to live righteously, how to avoid evil. But there is one thing that this clear, worthy instruction does not contain, it does not contain the secret of what the illustrious one himself experienced - he alone



among hundreds of thousands"<sup>9</sup>.

Here is one among many reasons to show why Buddhism as a religion could not gain ground in the land it was born. Indians from times immemorial, as a rule, look towards salvation. Any work they do in this mundane world somehow or other is linked to - Moksha. Right from the rites performed for the salvation of the ancestors to the rites performed in marriage ceremonies, all are linked to that one word Moksha. But Buddha to put it in Dr. D. Anjaneyulu's words.

"Presented the ethical way to the masses, without bothering himself about the metaphysical subtleties". He further says "It might be pertinent to remember that Buddha did not find a new religion, at least he was not aware of it : he would be called a *Social reformer*, to start with, as he sought to purify the individual and improve society". He quotes Rhys Davids "Gautama was born and brought up and lived and died a Hindu"<sup>10</sup>.

Amiya Bhushan Sarma argues in the same vein, "The Buddha was an awakened soul. He had seen the falsity of many an illusion. Such knowledge, as he had, was incommunicable. *Everyone had to undergo the journey through 'reality' to reach 'the shady city of palm trees'*"<sup>11</sup>.

Siddhartha argues with Buddha, in the novel, on these lines over which Buddha expresses complete equanimity and blesses Siddhartha, but not without a warning "Be on your guard against too

much cleverness". Govinda joins the monk order of Buddha.

After this Siddhartha falls into trance and slowly arising from that trance he looks around the world and finds it beautiful. He recognized that in search of Atman he was fleeing from himself.

"He saw trees, stars, animals, clouds, rainbow, rocks, weeds, flowers....."<sup>12</sup>.

That night he had a dream of kissing a woman's breast and tasting the milk.

"It tasted of woman and man, of sun and forest, of animal and flower of every fruit of every pleasure"<sup>13</sup>.

Next day he crosses the river with the help of the 'Ferry man Vasudeva' and reaches a grove where he saw Kamala the courtesan.

From here he enters the next stage of Hindu life *Garhastya-or-sansara*. At the first sight, he understood that Kamala is the woman who could teach him what he lacks, the art of love. Like a stone thrown into still water he finds his quickest way into the worldly life. He conducts his employer, Kamaswami's business with detachment. But, "Kamaswami conducted his business with care and often with passion, but Siddhartha regarded it all as a game, the rules of which he endeavoured to learn well, but which did not stir his heart"<sup>14</sup>.

Siddhartha remained a samana in heart for a long time and learnt the



## HERMANN HESSE'S SIDDHARTHA AND THE ANCIENT INDIAN WAY OF LIFE

49

art of love from Kamala. But what was in the beginning a game has now gradually become a passion. He tasted riches, passion and power.

"The holy fountain head which had once been near and which had once sung loudly within him, now murmured softly in the distance"<sup>15</sup>.

The world has caught him. His senses became more awakened. The soul sickness of the rich crept over him. Years rolled by and Siddhartha was unmindful of them. He entered his forties. One day after making love with Kamala he noticed on her face, near the corners, fine wrinkles, a sign which gave a reminder of autumn and old age. That night he had a dream in which the pet bird of Kamala died. Stirred with this, Siddhartha ruminated over his past, understood that he was caught in the life cycle like any other human being. The same night Siddhartha left the town and never returned.

Then he enters the next stage of his life *Vanaprastha* (*retirement to the forest*). *Vanaprastha* is like an anteroom before one enters the main chamber of *Sanyasa*. Here one must lead a secluded life and undergo training, purgate all the emotions, passions, bonds and snap the last ties. Siddhartha, sick of *sansara*, now reached the river that he crossed with the help of the ferryman, when he entered *sansara*. At the moment, when he contemplated suicide, came from a remote part of his soul, the one word- the one syllable OM. Then he fell into a sleep, deep and dreamless. When he awoke, it seemed to him as if

ten years had passed. The dream, that was *sansara* has now faded; he was free like a child. He decided to settle down near the river with the ferryman 'Vasudeva' and listen to the secrets of the river. Years passed. They were now two friendly old ferrymen listening silently to the river.

For Siddhartha the last purgation is yet to happen. He received his child from Kamala who was, on her way to see the dying Buddha, bitten by a snake and was in her last hours of life. He built a funeral pyre and performed the last rites. He took under his care, the child, a spoilt mother's boy. Siddhartha with great patience and perseverance attended on the boy hoping to win him over, the arrogant and defiant boy had scant respect for the old friends.

"But he (Siddhartha) loved him and preferred the sorrow and trouble of his love rather than happiness and pleasure without the boy"<sup>16</sup>.

Vasudeva advised him against keeping the boy. "Do you not compel this arrogant spoilt boy to live in a hut with two old banana eaters, to whom even rice is a dainty, whose thought cannot be the same as his, whose hearts are old and quiet and beat differently from his"<sup>17</sup>.

But Siddhartha felt that this love was not worthless, that it was necessary.

"It came from his own nature. This emotion, this pain, these follies also had to be experienced"<sup>18</sup>.

One day the boy ran away to the



town never to return. Vasudeva tried in vain to console Siddhartha. But Siddhartha searched for the boy till he reached the outskirts of the town when he realized painfully :

"That the desire that had driven him to this place was foolish, that he could not help his son, that he should not force himself on him"<sup>19</sup>.

The wound smarted for a long time. But *this experience* made people no longer alien to him when he worked as a ferryman.

"Their vanities, desires and trivialities no longer seemed absurd to him. They had become understandable, lovable and even worthy of respect"<sup>20</sup>.

All this experience prepared the ground in his heart. He is now becoming a 'Paripoorna'.

"Within Siddhartha there slowly grew and ripened the knowledge of what wisdom really was and the goal of his long seeking. *It was nothing but a preparation of the soul, a capacity, a secret art of thinking, feeling and breathing, thoughts of unity at every moment of life*"<sup>21</sup>.

But somewhere in the dark recess of his heart the wound smarted. So he decided to confess to Vasudeva who knew the art of listening.

"Disclosing his wound to his listener was the same as bathing it in the river, until it became cool and one with the river. As he went on talking and confessing, Siddhartha felt more

and more that this was no longer Vasudeva, no longer a man who was listening to him. He felt that this motionless listener was absorbing his confession as a tree absorbs the rain, that this motionless man was the river itself, that he was God Himself, that he was eternity itself"<sup>22</sup>.

This scene makes one remember Arjuna's enlightenment in the eleventh chapter of Bhagavad Gita. Vasudeva was Krishna himself listening with a radiant smile Siddhartha's confession. When self-realization dawned on Siddhartha, Vasudeva took his leave.

"I am going into the woods. I am going into the unity of all things, said Vasudeva, radiant"<sup>23</sup>.

Now the most important stage in the ancient Indian way of life - Sanyasa - Moksha or Salvation. After Vasudeva, Siddhartha took over the role of ferryman. Govinda, the Buddhist monk was wandering and still seeking Salvation, heard about an old, wise ferryman. He wanted to hear from the old ferryman his doctrine.

Siddhartha then tells him that wisdom is not communicable. The wisdom which a wise man tries to communicate always sounds foolish. If wisdom is 'Swadharma' when, communicated it will be 'Paradharma' which is 'Bhayavah'. One can experience wisdom but not communicate. That Siddhartha did in his life.

*"I learned through my body and soul that it was necessary for me to sin,*



## HERMANN HESSE'S SIDDHARTHA AND THE ANCIENT INDIAN WAY OF LIFE

51

*that I needed lust, that I had to strive for property and experience nausea and the depth of despair in order to learn not to resist them, in order to learn to love the world, and no longer compare it with some kind of desired imaginary world, some imaginary vision of perfection, but to leave it as it is, to love it and be glad to belong to it*"<sup>24</sup>.

Govinda hears his friend in bewilderment. He realizes that Siddhartha had become enlightened. He is now a 'Sthithaprajna', above good and evil, untouched by sin and as a lotus leaf (is untouched) by water. A sloka from chapter-V of Bhagavad Gita cannot be out of place to show the position of Siddhartha.

*brahmany adhaya karmani  
sangam tyaktva karoti yah  
lipyate na sa papena  
padmapatram iva mbhasa*

"He who works, having given up attachment, resigning his actions to God, is not touched by sin, even as a lotus leaf (is untouched) by water"<sup>25</sup>.

Govinda is now helped by his friend Siddhartha, the one whose aim is achieved, in his self-realization. "Bend near to me! he whispered in Govinda's ear. Come still nearer, quite close! Kiss me on the forehead, Govinda"<sup>26</sup>.

Then Govinda no longer saw the face of his friend Siddhartha. He saw in Siddhartha what Arjuna saw in the 'Viswaroopa' as Krishna in the eleventh chapter of Bagavad Gita.

"He no longer saw the face of his

friend Siddhartha. Instead he saw other faces, many faces, a long series, a continuous stream of faces..... He saw the heads of animals, boars, crocodiles, elephants, oxen, birds. He saw Krishna and Agni"<sup>27</sup>.

Siddhartha is now 'Paripoorna'. He achieved his goal by passing through the four ashramas of the ancient Indian way of life. These four stages are like purgatorial fires burning out lust, desire for wealth, filial bond etc. They are the 'Moksha Marga'. One must strive through them but not be simply caught in them like the Kamaswamis of the world. Even Gautama Buddha had undergone all these stages. There are striking similarities in the lives of Siddhartha and Buddha. (Siddhartha is the name of Gauthama Buddha).

It is better to end in the words of Amiya Bushan Sharma "Nothing, save Savitri, was written in this century which expresses *the soul of India so well*"<sup>28</sup>.

### REFERENCES

1. Hermann Hesse, Siddhartha Macmillan India (Pub. 1973) P.3.
2. Siddhartha - P.5.
3. T.S. Eliot - the Waste Land - Ed. Vasanth A. Sahane Oxford University Press - 1987 Line 384 P.88.
4. The Bhagavad Gita, Translated by S. Radha Krishnan, Oxford University press - 1989 Chapter-II Samkhya Theory and Yoga Practice sloka 46, P.119.



## A Poem

*I do not write .. . . .*

— R. K. Singh

I do not write the sun, storm or sea  
 but re-create myself and others  
 in verses turn time or pluck some stars  
 to find my ways through masked trenches  
 witness to my sinking into mud  
 that carves the memories into bias  
 disgrace dust, sky, wind, all relations  
 window of emotions I must chain  
 to breathe a pure breath without passion  
 and discover essence of beauty  
 spring a move toward self harmony  
 perfection and peace, prelude to nude  
 enlightenment to carve life in full

*(Continued from previous page)*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 5. Siddhartha - P.12.  | 13. Siddhartha - P.39.   |
| 6. Siddhartha - P.11.  | 14. Siddhartha - P.53.   |
| 7. Siddhartha - P.13.  | 15. Siddhartha - P.61.   |
| 8. India and World Literature, Edited<br>by Abhai Maurya, Published by<br>Indian Council for Cultural<br>Relations - 1990. Hermann Hesse<br>S. Siddhartha and the Ancient<br>Indian Philosophical Tradition -<br>Amiya Bhushan Sharma P.339-<br>340. | 16. Siddhartha - P.94.<br>17. Siddhartha - P.95.<br>18. Siddhartha - P.97.<br>19. Siddhartha - P.100.<br>20. Siddhartha - P.102.<br>21. Siddhartha - P.103.<br>22. Siddhartha - P.105.<br>23. Siddhartha - P.108.<br>24. Siddhartha - P.113. |
| 9. Siddhartha - P.28.  | 25. Bhagavad Gita - RAdha Krishnan,<br>Cp.V. P.178.  |
| 10. Triveni - Vol.63 - July - Setpember<br>(1994) Commemoration issue on<br>Buddha - Dr.D. Anjaneyulu -<br>Gautama The Buddha - The man<br>and his message.  | 26. Siddhartha - P. 117.<br>27. Siddhartha - P. 118.   |
| 11. India and World Literature - P.335.  | 28. India and World Literature P.343.  |
| 12. Siddhartha - P.37.   |  |



# THE BURNT LYRIC

53

— Peddibhotla R. Subbramiah

"I've lived too long, needlessly", mused Sethuraman. He leaned against a pillar in the small verandah.

A few strands of grey hair, sunken eyes and a creased face gave him a prematurely old appearance.

On the previous night he tried his best to snatch a little bit of sleep on a mat spread in that verandah, but it eluded him.

The moment he closed his eyes, it was a signal for invasion of nightmares and bizarre scenes on his mind.

Not only yesterday. It has been a recurring feature for the last four days.

Sound of footsteps. Someone was approaching him. He turned his head. Ah, it was the doctor. Sethuraman rose to his feet. The doctor looked young. He smiled at Sethuraman by way of saying 'Hello'. A film of tears clouded Sethuraman's vision when he sought the support of the pillar. The doctor lingered at the entrance for a while and peeped in, but didn't get in. Sethuraman knew there was no need, either. The doctor turned around abruptly and waled away, almost brushing Sethuraman. The 'tak tak' of the doctor's shoes couldn't drown the words which escaped his lips. Sethuraman could make them out. 'Poor soul, she's waiting for death'.

He could see the two rooms which

lay beyond. Not too large. The one on the left was vacant..... But the one on the right.... Sethuraman wiped his eyes.

In the room on the right side his empire of music was going to pieces, was ablaze and getting reduced to ashes. It has been happening for the last four days. Four days and nights too.....

Before him stood a sprawling hospital. Where ordinary folk could have rooms with simple facilities. For very important persons rooms were available with very special comforts. But no vacancy there. None knew why this two-roomed structure existed here. Intriguing. Luckily one of the rooms fell vacant.

Sethuraman snapped his fingers. The bad taste of the tea he had in the morning, at a stall outside the hospital, lingered in his mouth. He felt jaded. A sort of uneasiness filled him.

Abruptly a train sped along the track behind the hospital, whistling all the while. Even after it traversed a long distance, its dreadful noise still echoed in Sethuraman's ears.

Several scenes of the east materialised before his eyes.....

It was summer, Mid-day In the spacious backyard stood an acacia tree. (or was it an almond tree?) Under its shade the sunlight lay scattered, as if it was shredded. Pankjavalli sat at its base. Their conversation progressed in hushed voices. Inbetween partaking of snacks.... Minor arguments and titters.



Sethuraman came out of the reverie with a start and looked around. Perched on the compound wall, a multi-coloured bird chirped.

Again the reminiscing.

Long ago... It was summer. Mid-day again...

When a koel, atop a tree branch, trilled, the two of them imitated it and incited the bird. Egged on by them, the koel trilled more stridently. The pastime continued till either the koel or the duo gave up in exhaustion. Several times they tried to locate it, but in vain.

Yes, the koel was now a spent force. Worn out, dejected. Not even an ounce of energy was left behind in its frail frame.... Sethuraman pulled himself up. He walked up to the doorstep softly and looked in. An iron cot lay close to the window. Through it was visible a small datura plant which nestled against the wall. The inner walls of the room were bright. Close to the cot stood an old wooden closet.

Sethuraman rubbed his chest with his palm, even as he had a spasm of cough. He controlled it with great effort and scanned the room. From the sheet covering her emaciated body stuck out her thin forearms and visible was her head. A solitary red bangle adorned one wrist. The other hand which rested on her chest was bare. Above it her neck, scrawny and dark. The neck from which spread the melody of music which engulfed the country. Sweetness of voice which could melt stony hearts. And then the dusky face. Aquiline nose, wide lustrous eyes. (Those eyes were now

closed. Whether or not they would open again was unpredictable.) Her fore locks caressed by the light breeze swayed gently. On one of her shrivelled cheeks, spread a thin film of sweat.

Sethuraman withdrew from the scene. Obviously it was a marriage party which moved past the hospital. Shehnai notes, carried gently by the wind, reached his ears.

Suddenly he had an urge to smoke. Only one biri was available in his pocket, but no match box to light it. Reluctantly he suppressed the urge, and wanted very much to throw away the biri. On a second thought he abandoned the idea. His property, not much to reckon, was mostly frittered away on biris. His parents, who tried hard to persuade him to marry and settle down in life, were no more. No other kin. His property melted and evaporated gradually, though not quickly, like burning camphor. Shehnai notes faded as the marriage party moved farther. Silence reigned.

Sethuraman was presently reminded of Pankajavalli's marriage. On the eve of it, signs of her ruling over the empire of music became apparent. She loved Ravi. Struck by his masculine handsomeness, she adored him. And their wedding was celebrated with pomp and splendour. Many extolled it as an ideal marriage. And a good majority admired the groom. May be she was mistress of music, but then she wasn't a suitable bride for an attractive young man like him, sniggered some. A few more complimented him for his love of fine arts. To all that was said and



## THE BURNT LYRIC

55

thought of him, Ravi's response was just a smile. He never revealed his mind to others.

Amidst the bustle, Sethuraman sat aloof, lost in his thoughts. Even though the woman whom he sought from his childhood days and whom he loved ardently was snatched away from him, was not pained. On the contrary, he was elated that she could marry the man she loved.

It all happened ten years ago. Ravi was very careful and calculating. He had plenty of knack and shrewdness to acquire whatever he set his heart on. The concerts his wife had to attend, the money to be collected, the cheques to be encashed and the accounts - he took care of every thing. He was meticulous in all those transactions.

If at anytime Pankajavalli were to complain, "I'm indisposed and running temperature. I can't attend the concert. I'm so tired", he would cajole her thus : "My goodness. Please don't say no. I've taken advance from the organisers. No I'm afraid we'll have to go. How can you skip a concert, just because of slight fever? Please, dear ?"

If on some other occasion she were to plead with him, "A gentleman requested me to sing in aid for charity or an orphanage. Pity, a hundred orphans seem to be almost starving: I'm inclined to help them", He would smile ingratiatingly and say, "Good of you ! Won't your health be affected if you start giving free concerts ? Forget it. Affluent people must go to the rescue of the orphans, and not we. After all, what

help can we extend? Leave such things to me, dear !"

Sethuraman searched his pockets. Two crumpled one rupee notes and some small change was all the cash that he possessed now. A spacious house in the town, three acres of wet land in his village and four acres of dry land to raise tobacco crop. Only they were the remnants of the vast property he had owned, but now its all gone.

From the time Pankajavalli was married, Sethuraman has been living in a two-room tenement opposite her house. He hired the services of a servant boy for odd jobs and a cook. Several years had since gone by. But Ravi and Pankajavalli were never out of the sight. Tongues spewed venom on Pankajavalli but none spoke ill of Ravi. Almost every one had an unkind word for her alone. That she was a gold-digger, that she would sing only when money was in the deal, that she had grown greedy and that she was selling music... He heard several such accusations. But people never knew to which account all that money went and into whose hands.

She conversed with Sethuraman very rarely and spoke the least on those occasions. He could notice that her attraction for Ravi and her infatuation were on the wane gradually. He could also observe her sitting alone in the house, occasionally in a forlorn state. What Ravi was interested in was her voice which fetched him thousands of rupees, but not Pankajavalli, shorn of beauty, or her frail body or her heart. He had no need for them. For he has



made other arrangements for his pleasures. His relationship with his spouse almost ceased, except for fixing her concert date etc. He however continued to maintain the house. But then how many resided in it? Just Pankajavalli and a housekeeper, who looked after her. Whenever a concert was arranged, he would arrive in a car, pick her up, drive her to the venue and drop her at the house as soon as the show was over.

Very recently, when she complained of a burning sensation in the throat and pleaded her inability to sing, he shouted at her, flew into a rage, threatened her and forced her to attend the concert. On her return, when she writhed in pain, Ravi left the house in a haste. She coughed and coughed and finally she spat blood. That made Sethuraman jittery and his heart beat fast in anxiety.

He stretched out his legs and sat there for long. Darkness spread and it could be ten in the night. There was no decent hotel in the neighbourhood. The bread he ate at the tea-stall opposite the hospital, a while ago, seemed to have got stuck in his stomach.

Sethuraman recollected Ravi picking her up one day in his car, six months ago. At that time he was standing in the verandah of his tenement. They were back in half-an-hour. Dropping Pankajavalli at her house, Ravi drove away immediately. Sethuraman was curious to know what transpired between the two but it had not been possible till six in the evening,

when the 40 year old housekeeper Vanajamma stepped out. He beckoned her, engaged her in conversation and extracted the details. Vanajamma overheard their conversation and unable to contain herself, she revealed to Sethuraman what she has heard. He trembled like a leaf, when the shocking news strck him. Unable to withstand it, he slumped down. And remained in a frozen state for a while -- That delicate and beautiful throat was afflicted with cancer! He was overcome with grief.

Subsequent events moved fast. Ten days later Ravi paid her a formal visit, stayed there just for thirty minutes and went away. So callous! For another ten days there was no trace of him. Sometime later he had come once and gave Vanajamma some money. That was his last visit.

Sethuramam preferred to call on Pankajavalli occasionally and engage her in small talk. Childhood memories revived naturally. But most of the time she was only a silent listener. Any attempt on her part to speak caused her immense pain and discomfort. Spasmodic cough would tender her breathless. Such bouts of severe cough resulted in her spitting blood and collapsing in a state of exhaustion. With great effort she could speak only a couple of words. In a screechy and distorted voice.

"Why didn't you..... marry?

"Aren't.... you... employed?  
Why?"

Broken sentences, broken questions.



## THE BURNT LYRIC

57

One fine day he confided to her, "Look, Valli! I've made enquiries about Ravi. It seems he vacated his house here, and is now residing somewhere in Bangalore. He has withdrawn the entire money from the bank. Perhaps you may not be knowing that he married another woman, six months after he took you as his wife. What kind of marriage it was, none knows. He has been living with her all these days and now made himself scarce."

Panakjavalli listened to him, smiled and nodded her head, indicating she knew everything.

"Then you were aware of it all the while?" he questioned in bafflement.

She nodded again in assent.

Sethuraman didn't speak for a couple of minutes and then rose to his feet.

"Come, let us go to the doctor, I've made my own enquiries. Even now you can be operated upon. There's nothing to panic about.

The doctor is confident that your life can be saved if surgery is done."

She looked up quickly and protested, "Yes, my life can be saved. But I'll lose my voice. I must spend the rest of my life as a dumb soul, deprived of my voice."

"You may lose your voice, so what? You'll be alive, at least. You must live, yes", pleaded Sethuraman.

Pankajavalli sat up and spoke with resolution. "I'll be deprived of my voice. I can't even hum. Can't speak either. But I can eat and move about

huh! Is that all?"

Her eyes shone with a rare twinkle. And immediately tears welled up in those wide eyes.

Pausing for a few moments she remonstrated with him, "You're a childhood friend, You should know. It would be futile to live when once I lose my voice. I needn't live thereafter. I had better quit while I still possess my voice."

She then withdrew into the house, indicating she had nothing more to say.

Sethuraman shook off those memories and pulled himself up. By that time the senior doctor walked up to him. He could be fortyfive. Nobody in the hospital knew that a reputed singer like Pankajavalli was an inpatient. The senior doctor stumbled upon it when he casually examined the register three days back and saw her. As soon as he learnt of her identity, he was overwhelmed with surprise, collected the details of her case and discussed the pros and cons with his colleagues.

Angrily he shot the question at Sethuraman on that day, "You've brought your wife here at the last stage! How could you?"

The doctor listened patiently while Sethuraman gave a detailed account of everything, sighed and strode away.

He visited the hospital on the previous two days too.

Spotting Sethuraman there he was intrigued and asked, "Why, you're



still here ?" and went in.

"Where else?" Sethuraman mumbled to himself.

"I've to stick to this place till the end of the story. Thereafter don't know where I would be".

Sethuraman snapped his fingers and mused, "If only she could regain her consciousness and open her eyes, if only I could speak to her once, if only I could persuade her to listen to his heart-beat... how good would it be!..."

"Valli, my heart-throb! I've been in love with you right from the beginning. I love you, dear !"

Presently a wave of hot breeze swept across the place. Leaves from the trees dropped in clusters as a result.

The next moment the senior doctor emerged, clapped his hand and shouted, "Hello, anybody there? Come on, summon Dr. Rangiah, it's urgent!"

Sethuraman was gripped by anxiety. His feet trembled. He drew out the biri from his pocket with shaking fingers. The doctor, noticing him, shook his head sideways. Negative.

Sethuraman rushed in, even as his step faltered. The wind swept aside the blanket, revealing Pankajavalli's face. He caressed her sunken cheeks fondly with trembling fingers. "I'm touching you now, after a long gap." He told himself. He held back, with great effort, the tears which would have streamed down his face and readjusted the blanket on her face. Swallowing his grief, he withdrew from the spot.

Yesterday the doctor disclosed the presence of Pankajavalli in the hospital to a journalist, during the course of conversation. That scribe arrived on the scene now. Seeing him,

the doctor announced, "You remember I spoke to you of a woman yesterday? She is now no more."

"Ah!", the journalist exclaimed.

Ten to fifteen minutes glided away.

Sethuraman leaned against the pillar with his gaze fixed on the scene - of the corpse being brought out on a stretcher. Four or five people gathered there. They spoke in hushed voices. Questions were shot at random.

"Who, who died?"

"What does the husband do ?"

"No idea? what was the ailment?"

"Was she a singer?"

"Did she sing in any film?"

Someone pushed the stretcher forward. The doctor stood motionless in the verandah.

Sethuraman's eyes brimmed with tears. He wiped them with the huge hem of his shirt, extracted the biri from his pocket with fingers that were shaking, inserted it between his lips, rushed out of the hospital into the street and glanced around. He lit the biri at the kiosk, took a deep puff at it, and exhaled the smoke.

The next moment he flung it aside, wiped a patch of the pavement beside the station with his hands and curled up in a corner. He closed his eyes. Eyes in which tears welled up now, and then was lost in sleep.

In his sleep he dreamt of clusters of sandalwood trees, radiant with green foliage being engulfed by flames.

*Original Telugu Story :  
DAGDHA GEETAM  
Rendered into English by : P.S.RAO*



# PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA'S

## "Whispers from Eternity"

- K. V. Rama Rao

*(Note : The Birth Centenary of Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952) was celebrated all over the world in 1993. Hailed as a spiritual luminary and an avatar by Swami Sivananda and the late Paramacharya of Kanchi, Paramahansa Yogananda did yeomen service in spreading Kriya Yoga in the West. He lived and worked in America for over three decades. His magnum opus AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI is hailed as a spiritual classic and is translated into 19 languages of the world. Yogananda was practical and scientific in his approach to life and God. He is an eminently twentieth century man. He published three books of poetry. One of them is WHISPERS FROM ETERNITY. An interesting aspect of Yogananda's conception of Godhead is studied hereunder :)*

God is Love. God is unconditional love. Creation is rooted in love. God indulges in a game of hide-and-seek with his devotees. He is the hound of Heaven, ever pursuing His children, lovingly. He can use force, but he never does, to extract obedience or love from His children. he is a true democrat. He has given his children Freewill and he wants to see if His children use their 'free will' to love Him. If, instead of loving the Giver of all gifts, the children love only the gifts of the world - he waits patiently, tenderly, pitying their foolish play with

things of the world.

The Master of this whole Creation, God, has 'something' to aspire for, and that is our love. Unless we choose to bestow it on Him, He cannot have it. These are some of Yogananda's ideas about God. His ideas about man's life on earth and the goal of human life are as follows:

Man is engaged in a quest. His soul yearns for joy, unsullied joy. Unguided by wisdom or guided by unwisdom man erroneously thinks that things of the world, or sense pleasures give him joy. But they do not give permanent happiness. Disillusioned, man turns to God and tries to re-establish his (never-severed, but not-realized) kinship with God. Man's search or pursuit of god takes various forms.

The multi-hued man-God relationships have formed a rainbow-bridge between terrestrial and celestial planes, between the human and the divine aspects of the SELF- in this eternal 'lila' (play) of hide-and - seek.

Paramahansa Yogananda, though a great yogi and sage in the line of Vedic Rishis, is a product of the twentieth century, in the externals of his being. His scientific approach to life and God, his cosmopolitanism and world-wide sympathies, his expatriate



existence in America for more than thirty years, his love of individual freedom and democratic approach to life and God - all these make him a twentieth-century man. And all these characteristics find expression in his writings including prose-poems (which again, is another strong characteristic of the twentieth century literary scene).

In his standard and regular prayer Paramahansaji invokes God as "Heavenly Father, Divine Mother, Friend, Beloved God" - all in a row; all in one. Depending on his playful mood or scientific or imaginative turn of mind Yogananda has invented many new names by which to attract the attention of his Friend, Beloved, God - reflecting the Formless One is visualized and addressed in various forms by Paramahansa Yogananda. Some of these names are new and modern and reveal the novel way in which Yogananda conceived God, the Divine Player of diverse roles. They are not only anthropomorphic, but some represent forces from physical, chemical and natural sciences and some are contemporary social concepts.

The Potter and the Wheel are literary commonplaces. Omar khayyam, Kabir and Robert Browning and many others used this image. But Yogananda's conception is cosmic and grand - it inspires awe rather than 'vairagya' (philosophic disillusionment).

"With vibratory fingers didst Thou mould earth's clay ball; daily Thou art whirling it, ray-strung to the sun and rhythmically revolving around it.

"O Cosmic Potter, on Thy wheel

of life; Thou dost form trillions of never duplicated vessels of flesh-vulnerable vehicles of man's immortal spirit." (*Whispers from Eternity*, P. 16)

Thus the emphasis, in describing human bodies, is on the amazing variety and on the deathlessness of spirit rather on life's fragile littleness.

The commerce of daily living is elevated to the status of a fine art in the hands of the artist Yogananda.

"Thou art the Originator, manufacturer, and ever-timely Exhibitor of 'Nature-Products'. Thou art the Celestial Salesman who extols the value of new inner possessions for the fine art of gracious living." (*Whispers from Eternity*, P. 17).

Thus industry and commerce which are the warp and woof of modern life are pressed into the service of poetry and of God - "All material things may be brought and sold, but Thou, O Priceless one, art not for sale!" (P. 17) declares the Yogi-poet.

Employing many modern metaphors the poet describes God as the mystic Electrician, the Divine Dynamo, the Patient Physician, the Divine Sculptor, the blessed Broadcaster, Lord of Phantasmagoria and Light of Supernatural subtlety. He is also referred to as the Divine Bee, the maker of dreams and the Divine Incendiary.

'I shook the pillaring hours and pulled my life upon me' - said Francis Thompson. Let us have a look at Yogananda's 'cottage':

"Come Thou, O Mystic



## PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA'S Whispers from Eternity

61

Electrician! My little Soul cottage by the brook of life is in need of repairs.

"The nerve wiring has been shaken and torn by the winds of the years. The multihued lamps of my senses are no longer effulgent.

"O Builder of Bodies, O Divine Dynamo of all cosmic currents of life force! Resurrect the deadened wires of my wrecked nerves and infuse them with Thy power, that my senses gleam again with Thy glory." (*Whispers from Eternity*, P. 31)

With the advance of years, nerves become weak and senses become dull. They need to be repaired and strengthened either the material or the spiritual way. According to Yogananda, the ultimate healer is God who heals through his omnipresent cosmic energy; others are his instruments.

Calling God the Mystic Electrician and describing the human body as a cottage with the 'wiring' of

nerves is a superb piece of metaphoric utterance.

Edgar Allan Poe (in his 'Sonnet to Science') like the other Romantics, bewailed how Diana is pulled down from her chariot (the ill-effects of science on poetic imagination). Many modern poets have mastered and 'enslaved' some aspects of science. The yogi-poet, who can see (because he is a SEER) farther and deeper than others, describes God as a Light of Supernatural Subtlety and says:

"Thou dost hide behind Thine ultra-violet rays in the sun and in earth - bombarding cosmic rays. Lord, Thine etheric veil, patterned with intricate crisscrosses of countless invisible currents, effectively conceals Thee from me. Drop Thou the raiment of space, that I see Thee without matter - illusions." (*Whispers from Eternity*, P. 56).

### REFERENCE :

Paramahansa Yogananda, *Whispers from Eternity*, Calcutta, Yogoda Satsanga Society of India, 1982.

**Arjuna :** "If knowledge is considered superior to works, then why do you engage me in this terrible deed (of fighting)? You confuse my mind with statements that seem contradictory. Tell me for certain that one way by which I could reach the preferable goal ?"

**Sri Krishna :** "Freedom from action is not gained by abstaining from action.... And no man attains perfection merely by renunciation. Action is superior to inaction—Indeed, without action of some sort, even sustaining the body will be impossible. The world is bound up with action, work, one must, therefore but without attachment".

— *Bhagavadgita.*



# THE WAYWARD WOMAN IN THE SOCIAL COMEDIES OF OSCAR WILDE

— Dr. M. Venkateswara Rao

Writing as he did in 1914, Frank Chandler in his "Aspects of Modern Drama" observed, "In the recent drama, few types of characters have been more frequently portrayed than the wayward woman. Her waywardness has been represented as a matter of the past or of the present, as something repented of or persisted in. It has been represented, also, as trivial or grave, the result of passion or of principle. Among recent playwrights, three have achieved especial success in analysing this character. Sunderamann, Wilde and Pinero." (p. 121).

One of the charges levelled against Oscar Wilde as a dramatist is that he succeeds in depicting bad characters, and not good characters. While his rogues and cynics, male and female, are drawn with an admirable sureness of touch and a really wonderful wealth of detail, his good people are considered to be mere shapes and dummies, feeble reproductions or wornout types. So much so, like Milton, Wilde is accused of being secretly of the devil's party. Newell Sawyer in his book "The comedy of Manners from Sheridan to Maugham" says in this context "Wilde's forte is in the vices, not the virtues"; again, "Wilde is distinctly at his best with his women with a past like Mrs. Erlynne and Mrs. Cheveley." (p. 157). Three women with a past figure in the three serio-comedies of Wilde - Mrs. Erlynne in "Lady

Windermere's Fan", Mrs. Arbuthnot in "A Woman of No Importance" and Mrs. Cheveley in "An ideal husband".

Mrs. Erlynne is the central character of the most celebrated comedy of Wilde 'Lady Windermere's Fan' (1892). According to the English critic, James Agate, Mrs. Erlynne is the first woman of her sort in Modern English Play, Pinero's Mrs. Tanqueray being her junior by one or two years. She is a cynical adventuress with a past, a demimondaine, a woman with light morals. Twenty years ago she abandoned her husband and one-year old daughter and bolted with a lover. Deserted by that lover, she has led the life of a socially - ostracised outcast. Six months before the play begins, she learns that her grown-up daughter has married a rich and titled gentleman. From the continent she lands in London and gets in touch with her son-in-law, Lord Windermere. She has hooked an elderly Lord, Lord Augustus who wants to marry her.

She blackmails Lord Windermere for the money she needs to reestablish herself in society, and to marry Lord Augustus. If he does not supply her with the needed funds, she will reveal to lady Windermere the relationship between him and herself. Lord Windermere wants to spare his wife the humiliation of knowing that such a creature as Mrs.



## THE WAYWARD WOMAN IN THE SOCIAL COMEDIES OF OSCAR WILDE

63

Erlynnne is her mother. Mrs. Erlynnne manages to wrangle an invitation from Lord Windermere for the twenty-first birthday of her daughter, Lady Windermere. Attending this birthday party of her daughter marks a watershed in the life of Mrs. Erlynnne. From the time she sails beautifully into the drawing room of her daughter, the atmosphere there is electrified. Lady Windermere, who has earlier threatened to strike Mrs. Erlynnne across the face with the birthday gift, a fan, if Mrs. Erlynnne dares to cross her threshold lacks courage to carry out her threat. The fan drops from her hand. In a short while, Mrs. Erlynnne captivates all the men and outshines all the women present, there.

Lady Windermere, whose mind is already poisoned in this regard, suspects the relationship between Mrs. Erlynnne and her husband. She decides to leave her erring husband and elope with one of her admirers, Lord Darlington. she writes a letter about her decision, leaves it with a servant, and walks out of the house. Mrs. Erlynnne's aplomb vanishes when she discovers this letter. Full of anguish, she hides the letter after reading it, "The same words that twenty years ago I wrote to her father". Her motherly instincts, for the first time in twenty years, are thoroughly aroused. She is determined to save her daughter from the fate that overtook her. Making a dash to lord Darlington's apartments, Mrs. Erlynnne appeals to her as a wife to get back to her innocent husband. When this appeal does not work, she appeals to her as a mother to get back to her

baby daughter. This second appeal, made with all the vehemence at her command, succeeds.

But then it is a little too late. The men, including Lord Windermere, Lord Darlington and her elderly suitor, Lord Augustus are heard coming in. Very resourcefully, Mrs. Erlynnne manages to get her daughter away unnoticed. Then to avert suspicion that would blight her daughter's life, she emerges from her hiding place and herself faces humiliation. Referring to Lady Windermere's fan, lying on the sofa, she tells them all that she took Lady Windermere's fan by mistake for her own. She realises that she has made a terrible mistake in entering her daughter's life. Her shadow shall never fall again between Lady and Lord Windermere. She mollifies her elderly suitor and explains away her presence at that time of the night in Lord Darlington's rooms. He will marry her, and together, they will leave England for good.

Before she leaves, she extracts a promise from each one of them; Lady Windermere is never to spoil her husband's love by confessing to him how close she came to deserting him and eloping; Lord Windermere is never to reveal to his wife her identity. She also takes away as a gift that momentous fan of Lady Windermere. As a mother she makes a beautiful sacrifice for her daughter, but as a woman she senses her nature too well to seek domestic acceptability. A leopard cannot change its spots. At the end, Lord Windermere says to the groom-to-be, the silly old Lord Augustus, "Well, you are



certainly marrying a clever woman".

Mrs. Erlynne is not so good as Lady Windermere supposes. She has been a hardened sinner, the black-mailer of her son-in-law, and without a touch of maternal instinct until she sees her daughter about to fall. There is little evidence that she will greatly alter in future. She is mainly evil, but an impulse of natural generosity is still surviving. There is no denying that she has got some redeeming qualities as "a fallen woman".

The second fallen woman to make her appearance is in "A Woman of No Importance" under the name of Mrs. Arbuthnot (1893). Of her, the famous English critic, William Archer said in a review of the play in the "World", 26th April, 1893, "Mrs. Arbuthnot is simply a woman who has been through a very painful experience, who has suffered a crushing disappointment in the revelation of the unworthiness of the man she loved." Thirty-eight-year old Mrs. Arbuthnot's present name is an assumed name. Her maiden name is Rachel. Twenty years ago she was seduced and betrayed by the treachery of a man whom she loved and trusted. He is now Lord Illingworth. Then he was plain George Harford. He refused to marry her even when he learnt from her that she was pregnant. During the last twenty years she has suffered untold mental agony. But she has not repented of the 'sin', because it has given her a son to love. He is Gerald, working as a clerk in a bank. Her son's love is the only recompense for her 'shame'. At a party of her friend's Lady Hunstanton, she learns that Lord Illingworth has

taken a fancy for her son, and offered to make him his secretary and take him to India.

After knowing the identity of Lord Illingworth, she urges her son, Gerald, to decline the offer. For she knows that Lord Illingworth is a cad and a libertine under a polished surface. But she does not tell Gerald that Lord Illingworth is his father. Gerald wonders why his dear mother stands in the way of his advancement in life. Lord Illingworth soon comes to know of the identity of Mrs. Arbuthnot, a woman of no importance for him. He urges her to let Gerald go with in the best interests of her son. He exploits the situation to separate the son from the mother. However, circumstances compel her to reveal Lord Illingworth's identity to her son.

Lord Illingworth insults the sweet-heart of Gerald, an American heiress named Miss Hester Worsley, by trying to kiss her for a wager. Gerald, outraged at his caddish behaviour, rushes to assault him. Mrs. Arbuthnot cannot but stop Gerald by blurting out the secret that Lord Illingworth is no other than his own father. Later Lord Illingworth offers to marry her and give a lot of his property to Gerald. She rejects the offer with the contempt it deserves. Lord Illingworth, piqued by her rejection of his offer, insults her by referring to her as his former mistress.

This is the last straw. Even a worm turns. She takes revenge by striking him across the face with his glove. She shows him what he is really, a man of no importance. With her son



## THE WAYWARD WOMAN IN THE SOCIAL COMEDIES OF OSCAR WILDE

65

and his sweetheart, she emigrates to America to live out her life in a country where her pitiful, if not shameful, history is unknown. She leaves in full possession of the sympathies of the audience. No doubt, she is a woman with a past, but she is more sinned against than sinning.

The abominable Mrs. Cheveley, as H.G. Wells calls her, is the third woman with a past who figures in "An Ideal Husband" (1895). Like Mrs. Erlynne she is also a blackmailer and an adventuress, but unlike Mrs. Erlynne, she is a creature to be fought and conquered. Out of the middle of Europe, from Vienna, lands this blackmailer at the party of Lady Chiltern. This woman, Mrs. Cheveley has spent a large part of her life abroad where she deals in underground finance, and probably adds to her income by living with any rich man who will keep her. She is tawny haired, red - cheeked and white shouldered. She smokes cigarettes. Mrs. Cheveley is "a genius in the day time and a beauty at night." Chiltern knows her as a scheming and dishonest schoolmate. For a few days in the past she was also engaged to Lord Goring, an intimate friend of Lady Chiltern's husband, Sir Robert Chiltern. Sir Robert is now Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Eighteen years ago he was private secretary to a Cabinet Minister. Then he sold a state secret for £ 86,000. He also wrote a letter to a stock exchange

speculator about that Cabinet Secret regarding Suez Canal shares.

Mrs. Cheveley is now in possession of that letter. Now she demands that he should further a fraudulent scheme for an Argentine Canal in which she has invested heavily. He must support her nefarious scheme or else be exposed. Sir Robert, for fear of losing his wife's respect, determines to fight the adventuress. And Mrs. Cheveley takes revenge. She informs Lady Chiltern regarding her husband's past. She fights till she is routed utterly by the tactics of Lord Goring whom she attempts once again to capture as a husband. Her past record as a thief of a diamond brooch proves her undoing. She tries her utmost to make use of stolen letters to bring round Sir Robert. When all her gadgets from her black mailing bag fail, and when she is in danger of landing in Jail, Mrs. Cheveley feels and disappears from the life of the Chilterns. She is indeed "a sulphurous female" as an American critic describes her.

It is noteworthy that in all the three comedies in which the women with a past occupy the centre stage, there are women who serve as foils to them. They are all high minded, puritanical and priggish. In 'Lady Windermere's Fan' it is Lady Windermere; in "A Woman of No Importance", it is the American young woman, Miss Ester Worsley; and in "An Ideal husband" it is Lady Chiltern.



# THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN MADE KNOWN : ANTI-HERO IN THE FICTION OF BRUCE JAY FRIEDMAN

—E. Suresh Kumar

*"He was married and added five  
children to the population  
Which our Eugenist says was the right  
number for a parent of his generation  
And our teachers report that he never  
interefered with their education..."*

—W.H. Auden, "The Unknown Citizen",  
Collected Short Poems, 147.

W.H. Auden's poem, "The Unknown Citizen" depicts the anonymity of the common man in our age. However, Auden does not go into the ethical complexities of the unknown or anonymous average man. It is in modern fiction that the psychological, cultural or ethical trauma of the "Unknown citizen", is explored and revealed. The consequence of this exploration gave birth to a new concept of here in the modern critical tradition, namely the "anti-hero".

Béfore attempting to examine the typical anti-hero in the fiction of Bruce Jay Friedman who is a well-known American Jewish writer and an acknowledged Black Humourist, it is necessary to have a glimpse of the characteristic individuation of the "anit-hero". We are familiar with the significance of such terms as "the picaresque", "the burlesque", "the grotesque"

and "the absurd", as they have come to be used in modern critical discourse. There is good reason to consider these notions as the forerunners of the anti-hero. To quote M.H. Abrams :

A term sometimes applied to the typical protagonist to signify his discrepancy from the heroes of traditional tragedies, is the anti-hero : a man who, instead of manifesting largeness, dignity, power, and heroism in the face of the fate, is petty, ignominious, ineffectual, or passive.

(Abrams 1971 : 176)

The first scholar to examine in a relatively detailed manner, the concept of the anti-hero and also his place in modern American fiction, was Ihab Hussan in his book *Radical Innocence : Studies in the Contemporary American Novel*. Hassan states that "the modern hero... is an anti-hero" and points out three chief characteristic features of the anti-hero in modern fiction (31). One of them relates to the presence of a self-torturing or self-destructive element in the anti-hero. "The dagger is turned inward, the most refined tortures are



## UNKNOWN CITIZEN MADE KNOWN

67

reserved for the self" (22). The second concerns the anti-hero's search for identity. The third important feature of the anti-hero characterises his conduct in a work of fiction: "In the modern novel, man seems to overcome the contradictions of his experience, its destructive or demonic element, by assuming the role of the anti-hero, the rebel-victim. The rebel denies without saying 'No' to life, the victim succumbs without saying 'Yes' to oppression" (31).

In fact the anti-hero is not the villain of the traditional critical canon, but a protagonist who is precisely an inversion of the traditional hero. To put it differently, an anti-hero, is one typical species of hero who has the potential to become a hero but fails to do so for some reason or the other and as a result becomes a butt of ridicule. A number of factors like Oedipus complex, inferiority complex, insecurity and alienation, hostile social and cultural environment etc., may be responsible for this. The anti-hero, in his attempt to attune himself to his environment emerges as an absolute misfit. His predicament elicits a comic response from the reader though for himself it is as profoundly tragic as for King Lear or Hamlet.

However, one important virtue of the anti-hero is his naivety and unhypocritical vulnerability. In fact, every common man in the modern world -- particularly in the Western world which has experienced the horrors of two great wars -- is an anti-hero in his own right. This is applicable to the

common man alone because there is no dearth of heroes and supermen -- most of them self styled -- amongst us even in this age of democracy and technology.

The assumption underlying this paper is that, using this conceptual backdrop of anti-hero, it is possible to understand the fiction of Bruce Jay Friedman. Although he wrote three major novels viz. *Stern* (1962), *A Mother's Kisses* (1964), *The Dick* (1970), this paper confines itself to an analysis of *Stern* which is Friedman's first novel. Stern is the hero (i.e. anti-hero) of the novel. His very name has ironical implications because he is not at all and cannot be stern with anything, anyone or anywhere; he is just the opposite. He is a "tall, soft man" married to a "fragrant, long-nosed" woman whom he had loved at college. Mild and anxious by nature, Stern represents the anonymous millions in the modern world who are engaged in sundry nameless jobs.

Stern is a Jew by birth. His father was a silent small man who supported a family of wife and two children with difficulty because he worked as a cutter of shoulder pads, a low-paid occupation. The relationship between Stern and his father was just matter-of-fact. His mother was ambitious, unlike her mild husband, and was very careful about her appearance. Her influence on Stern, when he was a boy, led to a mild Oedipus complex in him. This slowly grows with him and he develops a sexual fantasy fancying himself to be a Jewish Don Juan



moving daringly with New York blondes. In reality he has no guts to approach any modern American girl because he suffers from the complex of discrimination meted out to Jews, not only in America, but all over the world. Likewise after marriage, in his relationship with his wife he feels sexually insecure because of a deeply hidden suspicion that he is not masculine enough to please his wife. He constantly suffers from baseless suspicions that his wife makes love to Jose, a modern dance instructor. Thus his Jewishness and his sexual fears are the two important factors which contribute to his gradual emergence into an anti-hero.

In a fit of emotion Stern shifts his residence from a safe, familiar and friendly Jewish urban locality in New York to a suburban gentile area. This adds to his troubles. The neighbours do not allow their children to play with Stern's children because the latter are Jews. One day in a quarrel between Stern's wife and a heavy Italian man (Kike man) she is pushed into the gutter in a shameful condition. When Stern comes to know about this, he feels that he should avenge the insult inflicted on his wife. But he is afraid of the Italian man and the other neighbours. Thus he develops an ulcer which spares him from the need to confront the "Kike man". Subsequently Stern joins a rest-home for five weeks.

Even his stay in the rest-home does not pass without making him feel guilty. Observing the other inmates who are suffering from serious ailments and problems, he thinks that his illness is not serious to justify his stay the rest-home. However, his experience in the company of two youngsters who play mischief with a Puerto Rican girl has a favourable influence on Stern. As he always suffers from a sense of alienation, and tries to identify himself with the mainstream of American life by liberating himself from his Jewish stigma, he passively joins the boys in hurting the girl. When she abuses all of them he feels gratified because that girl recognised him as part of the youthful mischief of the Americans. This, again, is a typical trait of the anti-hero.

After Stern returns home, his suspicions about his wife's fidelity haunt him. Furthermore his masculine need to avenge his wife's imagined insult by the 'Kike man' adds to his psychological tension. In a fit of artificial emotion, he goes to the house of the Italian and challenges him. They move into the backyard, where Stern receives a severe blow on his ear from the Kike man and in retaliation Stern deals a mild, ineffectual blow to his enemy and returns home shivering in fear with a bleeding ear. This episode again proves Stern to be an anti-hero.





# THE POLITICAL SCENE

— MAMIDIPUDI PATTABHIRAM

Parliament being the highest national forum in the country one would have thought that it would function effectively in shaping the country's domestic and international policies. Unfortunately that has not been the case at least in recent years. It is not to say that parliamentary democracy has not grown strong roots. The several general elections have shown how strong the system is. With a large percentage of voters still illiterate and with symbols guiding them at the time of elections, it is still a fact that successive polls have shown how democratic the Constitution is. By-elections too are efficiently executed. The fact that in nearly all neighbouring countries parliamentary democracy has not been as efficient as it has been in this vast country is proof that the democratic system is going to stay more and more vibrant. Yet it should be the effort of the ruling party in New Delhi not to give an impression that the role of Parliament as such in national affairs is getting diminished.

For the first time the comprehensive budget session was divided into three phases and this did cause some dent on its effectiveness. There was no continuity and the demands of many ministries were guillotined which means funds were voted without scrutiny or even discussion. This is a dangerous development as the Ministers go scot free as they do not have to answer for their deeds. There is no opportunity for

the members either, to review the performance of the ministries and sums are voted without even so much as a review. This naturally develops a certain sense of indifference among the Ministres. Their dependence on the bureaucrats will to that extent increase. Of course there are ministers who exercise undue influence on the officers manning the departments and this kind of politicisation is certainly harmful for the successful working of parliamentary democracy. There is also a big discrepancy between promise and performance which disappoints the people especially because this goes unchecked.

A stage might be reached when the people's confidence in the present form of government will be shaken. Surely this is not a very happy state of affairs and all those who are interested in the efficient functioning of Parliament should ponder over the developments. The system of standing committees for the ministries which has been introduced a couple of years ago is functioning well but its reports are not discussed in the full House so much so that persons who are not members of a particular committee do not know what is happening in regard to that ministry. The role of the entire House as an entity is thus seriously jeopardised. Standing Committees are intended to help and they cannot be a substitute for the House itself. There have been suggestions that legislatures are everywhere losing their



importance and in fact are declining. But this trend will have to be arrested which is possible only when members take greater interest in the proceedings. There have been occasions when the Lok Sabha, for instance, had to be adjourned for want of quorum. This again shows that the importance of Parliament is diminishing. There are also occasions when important policy statements are made outside Parliament even when it is in session. Then again there is a tendency to wrangle over procedural issues. This is due mainly to the stand taken by certain members who wish to make points in whatever way they can but more often than not this leads to unruly scenes even as the points they want to make invariably get lost. Therefore it is time the ruling party in association with the Opposition parties devised some formula by which Parliament sits for a longer number of days. Of course they will have to take the Speaker into confidence. Ultimately the people will judge their representatives by the work they are turning out. It is also true that matters of public importance will have to be discussed in Parliament but in the process legislative work which is equally important should not suffer. There are bound to be differences and difficulties but avoidable acrimony will have to be shed and that is the only way Parliament could be made more effective than is the case now.

The country has witnessed some significant political events in the months under review, the most important of which is the fall of the Government headed by the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan

Samaj Party combine in the most populous state of Uttar Pradesh. A new Government has taken over under the chief ministership of Ms. Mayawati of the BSP. She was till recently an unknown figure comparatively speaking, and to become the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh at the young age of 38 is indeed an achievement. But that does not necessarily mean that the change is for the better considering the record of the BSP as a political formation. It is supposed to be the spokesman (if this word could be used) of the Dalits and the party has been highly critical of the other parties vis-a-vis the underprivileged sections. Worse was the fact that Ms Mayawati has gone on record that Mahatma Gandhi was a hypocrite and practically did nothing for the Scheduled Castes whom he called Harijans. Ms. Mayawati even took objection to the word Harijans. Soon after she assumed office she assured the upper castes that she would do justice to them which, of course, conveys the impression that they were being sinned against all the while. While it is good to see a Dalit occupying a high post as that of a Chief Minister especially in a State which at one time was ruled by the country's greatest politicians such as Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, H.N. Bahuguna, S. Sampurnanand, C.B. Gupta and Sucheta Kripalani, it is a pity that the quality of leadership has reached so low.

A few weeks earlier Mr. Narain Dutt Tiwari, one of the most respected Congress leaders of U.P. suggested that his party should withdraw support to the SP-BSP combine because of the



## THE POLITICAL SCENE

71

misdeeds perpetrated by the Government. The Prime Minister did not heed his plea and a few days later he was replaced by another person as the President of the Uttar Pradesh Congress. If only his advice was accepted, the Government would have fallen and the spectacle of the BSP, a highly casteist organisation, ruling the State would not have arisen. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has gone out of the way to support the BSP although there was nothing common between them. Mr. L.K. Advani, the BJP chief, was at pains to explain that their single aim was to ensure the downfall of the Chief Minister, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, and this they achieved. But it is known to every one that the BSP which has only 69 members in a House of 425 totally depends on the support extended to it by the BJP and there is no guarantee either that this support is going to be beyond a few months, when Lok Sabha elections are due. In this entire bargain the Congress (I) is the worst sufferer. It has gained nothing and even as a matter of strategy the party has failed to do the right thing. People like Mr. M.L. Fotedar who have no roots have been instigating Mr. Arjun Singh and Mr. Tiwari to rebel and ultimately they were all thrown out of the Congress (I) after they had set up a Congress party of their own. There are no illusions that the new unit is going to gather much support but to the extent some prominent leaders have left the party, Mr. Narasimha Rao is weakened. Of course he had very little choice since his own position in the party was being threatened. The Prime Minister is passing through a very difficult period

and with elections to the Lok Sabha a few months away he has to work hard if the party should come back to power.

Following the electoral debacle in the South, many within the party have not properly understood the profound ideological mutation that Mr. Narasimha Rao has brought about, that he is unlike any other Prime Minister that this country has had. The Nehru-Gandhi style of leadership relied heavily on individual charisma, populist measures and fanatic personal loyalty to the leader. The fact that some of them had ideas was ultimately of no political consequence. Socialism was often a convenient disguise for populism. Mr. Rao's leadership, it must be recognised, is different in at least two crucial ways. He is the first Congress leader to have stated a truth that years of socialist profligacy had made obvious; resources are limited. A government cannot throw money away just to satisfy this or that segment of society. Mr. Rao made this clear when he said, "If I say I am going to do this, I will have to explain to the people how I am going to do this; where the money is going to come from, where are the other resources to come from." Every penny has to be accounted for in terms of the development of the society as a whole.

In other words there is a Lakshmana Rekha for vote bank politics. The other distinctive feature is that he enjoys almost no mass base. The two features are interdependent for Mr. Rao's lack of mass base of which he is fully conscious enables him to pursue



policies that are not election-oriented. It is Mr. Rao's endeavour to make an electorate nourished for years on ad hoc populist illusions respond to a well defined ideology which makes sound economic sense. The view expressed by several parties that the Congress (I) failed in the elections because of Mr. Rao's economic policies does not make much sense. On the other hand, Mr. Arjun Singh seems to suggest that the Congress (I) must regain its traditional vote banks and he is not too bothered if it meant compromising on economic reforms. His search for charisma had led him to Ms Sonia Gandhi and what he is seeking is a return to the old Nehru-Gandhi style of leadership which is not really possible. Mr. Rao has demonstrated that he could continue without the support of people like Mr. Arjun Singh but that is not to say that his task is easy. He has to devise ways and means of further strengthening his position without yielding much. It is a pity that the BJP on the other hand, has thrown all principles to the wind especially at a time when it was thought its legendary discipline would enable it to hammer together a platform in conformity with modernism just in time for the next election. Yet another matter that is of importance is the emergence of a cynical calculation that the Muslims have ceased to matter and the Hindu vote is more important to the Congress (I) to stage a comeback. Such thinking does undermine the cosmopolitan character of the nation, all for the sake of votes. The Muslim community too should

ponder over the fact that there has been a retreat of the moderates among Muslims which seems to create an impression in the Congress (I) that even a reconciliation is not warranted.

In the quarter under review, events in Jammu and Kashmir have taken a new course. The burning of the 15th century Charar-e-Sherif shrine by militants who had occupied it clandestinely having entered it as pilgrims has a grim story to tell. The small town too was occupied by the militants and the government was in no position to take the offensive for fear that the shrine would be set on fire. For several weeks it was under siege and in utter desperation the militants destroyed the holy place and tried to escape. This came at an awkward time for the Government with elections being considered in the coming weeks. President's rule which was to end on July 18 had to be extended for yet another six months thus upsetting the calculations of the Government. There has no doubt been bitter criticism of the proposal for a poll as peace had not returned to the Valley in full measure. But the Government is working its plan on the assumption that even a low turnout poll is better than no election at all. After all the political process has to commence somewhere and elections with all the trappings are still the best starting point for the arduous tasks ahead. It is also important that the Government should not lose the momentum of events and do some thing dramatic.

• • • • •



# BOOKS AND AUTHORS

73

- Dr. D. ANJANEYULU

Like Secularism and socialism, which tend to mean everything to everybody, 'Humanism' too has been used rather vaguely by the educated layman. It has come to mean, in common parlance, anything from charity and benevolence to all other varieties of humanitarianism in words or deeds. The result is inaccuracy in meaning and a blurred view of its connotation.

The term itself was presumably coined by a German educationist F.J.Niethammer, in 1808, to describe the study of the Greek and Latin classics, the revival of which had been one of the distinguishing characteristics of the European Renaissance. 'Humanism' as a philosophy implies a man - centred, rather than a God - centred, universe. It was the Greek philosopher, Protagoras, who first described man as the measure of all things. In due course, the scope of the concept has been widened to signify various theories based on human experience, and values derived from it, like equality, freedom, harmony, secularism, and scientific attitude. Even so, there is need for further clarification of various issues with the emphasis on contemporary relevance.

In the Twentieth century, especially in the Indian context, it was M.N.Ray, who outlined the main principles of radical Humanism, some fifty years ago, keeping it away from the narrow conflicts of electoral politics. But he didn't consider it enough for the ideas

to be intellectually stimulating, he wanted them to be related to purposeful and fruitful action.

A number of issues, therefore, arise, which continue to be discussed in study camps, from time to time. They include, among other things : What are the priorities of humanists in the Third World? What is it that impedes the much-desired New renaissance in India? What is the contribution of Indian humanists to the theory and practice of democracy? What are the concerns of humanists all over the globe? And what is the humanist response to the anti - humanist and post - modern trends in the academic world?

All these issues were discussed with courage and candour at the All - India Radical Humanist study camp at Hyderabad in December 1993 in an attempt to answer these and allied questions. The papers presented on the occasion have been collected in book form under the title '*The Humanist Way*' (edited by Dr. N. Innaiah and Mr. GRR Babu, Hema Publications, Chirala - 523 155 AP; Price Rs. 75/-).

The contents are classified under five sections : The Humanist's world; Humanism and the New Renaissance; Radical Humanism and Democracy; Statements on Humanism; and Humanist Response to Anti - Humanism. There are 21 contributors, apart from M.N.Roy himself, whose statements are reproduced. in addition to the two Editors, they include : Sibnarayan Roy;



Dr. Indu'mati Parikh. V.M.Tarkunde, (Justice) Avula Sambasiva Rao, M.K.Haldar, Niranjana Dhar, G.D. Parikh, Paul Kurtz, Prem Nath Bazaz, Abe Solomon, Hector Hawton, Etienne Boumans, Levi Fragell, Howard Radest and others.

In his essay on the 'Indian Renaissance Movement', M.N.Roy, after explaining the role of the pioneers of renaissance in Europe, feels that "a similar behaviour on our part in India, with an understanding of what the men of Renaissance in Europe actually did, is not only a possibility, but a necessity". Comparing Indian nationalism to "a powerful motor car running in the reverse gear", he appeals to the youth to get rid of pseudo-intellectualism, which tries to rationalise the irrational, and throw off the paralysing spirit of revivalism and initiate a movement to transform India into the land of a free, prosperous and progressive people".

In his detailed and well-written essay on "Ceremonies in India", Mr. GR Babu points out the positive and negative aspects of their role in daily life. His accent is on the evolution of "the sane society", which can be done by secular moral values, by promoting amity, by cherishing freedom and strengthening the cause of Human Rights.

Discussing the anti-Renaissance trends in India, Dr. Innaiah draws particular attention to our intellectual backwardness, fatalism and unreasonable pride in the anti-human tendencies of our past. He is confident

that Roy's vision of a cosmopolitan humanist order and theoretical articulations, with practical possibilities, is still very relevant.

A stimulating collection of essays with ideas that should be required reading for the young and old alike with their sights set on a better world and a more civilised society.

No two words have been so frequently used (bandied about, rather) or so seriously misunderstood in recent years in Indian politics as 'Secularism' and 'Fundamentalism'. In the preamble to our Constitution, India is described as a 'secular' State, which attribute amusingly, is employed to mean anything and everything, according to one's convenience.

'Secularism' can, and often does, mean giving a long rope to the religious minorities, with an eye to their potentialities as a 'vote bank'. The minorities too, on their part, especially Muslims, tend to wax eloquent about the merits of India as a "secular State". Obviously, it suits them perfectly in this situation. But is there any single example of a 'secular state', where the Muslims happen to be in a majority (expect possibly in Kamal Pasha's Turkey)? Even Britain is not a secular State (Church of England), though its society may be more secular than ours.

There are some well-meaning people in India, who equate 'secularism' with 'religious harmony' or 'equal respect for all religions' ('Sarvamata Sama bhavana'). Strictly speaking, that cannot be so regarded, as a truly, secular



## BOOKS AND AUTHORS

75

state does not recognise any religious denomination, caste, sub-caste etc, but expects every citizen to respect the law of the land. In which case, there would have been no need for amending the Criminal Procedure Code, to exempt Muslim widows and deserted wives from its operation and deny them its benefits (after the judgement in the Shah Bano case).

As for religious fundamentalism, it has become a fashion, meaningless to boot, to talk of 'Hindu fundamentalism' as against 'Islamic Fundamentalism'. It is not realised that there is no symmetry in religious attitudes. It is also not recognised that there is no single book, founder or church in Hinduism, without which there can be no fundamentalism. There is no room for proselytisation; and there is enough room for plurality and dissent.

Matters have come to such a pass that the case for Hinduism may be going by default, as a 'progressive' Hindu is ashamed to acknowledge his religion for fear of being dubbed a 'fundamentalist'. Hindu intellectuals, by and large, fight shy of explaining the recorded facts of history. Only two of them, both eminent journalists, had undertaken this thankless task, and performed it with their characteristic gusto, without pulling their punches.

One of them is the late Girilal Jain, who had a flair for conceptualising everyday political happenings to fit them into a philosophical pattern '*The Hindu Phenomenon*' (UPSD, Price Rs.75/-), presents a number of his writings on the

subject, collected after his death by his daughter. It is necessarily incomplete as it didn't have the advantage of revision by him. He does look at Hinduism and Islam in civilisational rather than theological terms. He defines 'Hindu rashtra' as "Hindu polity", not as "Hindu nation". He used to emphasise his view that while the Muslims are not yet reconciled to the loss of power the Hindus are not reconciled to their new-found power. It was also his considered view that no useful purpose is served by raking up the Babri Masjid issue, which is best forgotten.

As his daughter, Meenakshi Jain, says, unlike Islam and Christianity "the essential spirit of Hinduism was inclusivist, and not exclusivist... That is why he held the Hindus could not sustain an anti-Muslim feeling".

While the theme might be similar, its treatment by Mr. Arun Shourie in "*A Secular Agenda*" is different. In the sense that it is better documented and better organised, it deals with specifics, e.g. what ought to be done with the articles dealing with freedom of religion, how to ensure a common civil code for all citizens, etc. As he rightly adds, the individual should be the unit for the policies and laws of the State and not the religion or caste to which he belongs or to the region in which he lives.

One of the solid and lasting achievements of the World Telugu Federation, Madras, under whose auspices the World Telugu Conference was held (towards the close of 1994) was



the publication of a substantial souvenir of nearly 300 pages. It is well-planned and beautifully produced, presenting a wide variety of articles, both in Telugu and English.

It is edited by a Souvenir committee, comprising a large number of journalists, academic scholars and other intellectuals. The lion's share of the responsibility had obviously devolved on Mr. B.S.R. Krishna, senior journalist of Madras, who had worked hard on it for several months.

That total number of contributions, in prose and verse, exceeds 90, with 65 of them in Telugu and 26 in English. The range of subjects is very wide, covering culture, language and literature, art and aesthetics, history and heritage and problems and perspectives of Telugus abroad. The publication is called *Telugu Jagati* (World Telugu Federation (WTF), Ramakrishna Buildings, 183, Anna Salai (Mount Road), Madras - 600 006. Price Rs.200/-).

Dr. Asoke Chatterjee Sastri, Professor of Sankrit, Calcutta University, is an eminent Indologist of international reputation. The author of many erudite publications, including *Upanishad Yoga and Patanjala Yoga* and *Spiritual Thoughts of Ancient India*, he has been honoured with a certificate of honour by the President.

Professor Chatterjee, widely travelled and prolific as an author, is not perhaps as widely known in the South as in Calcutta, Varanasi and elsewhere. To felicitate him on his achievements, a fine volume of tributes, *Cultural Indica*, in the form of articles on different subjects is produced by a committee of scholars, with

Dr. Biswanath Bannerjee as the Editor-in-Chief (Sharada Publishing House, E-239, Shastri Nagar, Delhi - 110 052, pages 340; price Rs.800/-). This collection of sixty articles by contributors from far and near should be of lasting interest to students of the Indian heritage.

Countless must be the number of books written on the Second World War (1939-1945), on the political background and the military strategy. These are by participants, in the shape of history and memoirs, and by research scholars, drawing heavily on official archives.

But not many of such were by Indians, who don't belong to either category, but are eminently knowledgeable nonetheless. Mr. C. Kondapi is one of those few who wears his learning lightly, but whose information is authoritative.

Associated with various organisations forming part and parcel of the UN, Mr. Kondapi, had spent many years at the UN headquarters, with opportunities to meet many diplomats and political leaders of World stature. The present publication "Allied War Diplomacy and Strategy, 1940-45", represents the fruit of his lifetime's experience, study and knowledge.

The merit of the book is that it is scholarly without being scholastic; authoritative and not archival; readable as also reliable, useful for the general reader as well as the specialist in diplomacy and strategy. (Woodside Books, 16 Sharma Street, Madras-59, pages 566, Price Rs.495/-).



# REVIEWS

## 'SANKARA ON THE YOGA SUTRAS'

(A full translation of the newly discovered text by Trevor Leggett). Price Rs. 350 publishers- Motilal Banarsi Das, Jawahar Nagar Delhi 110 007 : -

This is a most valuable work. It contains an English translation of not only Patanjali's Yogasutras and Vyasa's terse commentary on them, but also a full translation of a newly found Sanskrit commentary named "Vivarana" on Vyasa's Bhashya, believed to have been written by Sankara, the expounder of the Advaita philosophy. An important feature of this commentary is that there is pull towards vedanta therein. The yoga view points out of that an omnipotent intelligent consciousness, a purposeful divine mind is the source of the universe is established on logical, rational and scriptural grounds. Dilatation upon this topic takes up, nearly one quarter of the whole "Vivarana" on the "Samadhipada". That the purusha of "samkhya" is different from the Vedantic purusha is made clear. Vivarana also contradicts the yogic view that "Samyama" produces supernormal powers. Sankara asserts that they do not arise in concentration. "The doctrine that the future exists and that time is purely relative expounded herein, anticipates the Einstein-view. "We learn Sankara had an idea of "gravity pull".

There are references to something like the anthropic principle

proposed recently. In fine, for a deeper and clearer understanding of Sankara, a keen study of this work is a must.

The two introductions, one to the general reader and the other to critical reader are as valuable as the newly found commentary. A summary of the text chapterwise is given briefly. salient features of Vivarana Commentary are presented. Even an ordinary reader can easily grasp the subject matter of the text and commentaries. There are about twenty subtitles in the critical introduction. though all of them are enlightening, portions, entitled "Sankara and yoga and "Sutras" (iii) 35-37 form the cream, and one should not miss them. The translator also points out how the Advaitic View is supported by Prof. Schrodinger.

Our praise goes to the publishers for having brought out this full Indian edition. They will do well to publish the original text or the commentary "Vivarana" in Sanskrit also which is not available now. The translator has done very well.

- B.K. RAO



**VARADA SMRITI** : Editor : Ms. Chayadevi, Seela Verraju, Kundurti, published by Abburi Trust, Hyderabad. Pages : 594 ; Price Rs. 200-

This fabulous volume is published on the eve of the first death anniversary of a multi faceted personlity, Abburi Varada Rajeswara Rau an illustrious son of an illustrious father Abburi Ramakrishnarao.

Gopalachakravarty paying a homage to Varada, as he was known to all, praised him and compared him to Getrude Stein and Ezra Pound itself is a story of contemporary Telugu literture., he was closely following the various trends from time to time as he had access to most of the literatuers of Telugu land of this century.

This volume carefully documents the various activities of Varada. It contains correspondence between himself and eminent men of letters V.R. Narla, Butchi Babu (S.V. Subba Rao) S.M.Y. Sastry, Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry, P.Padma Raju, Gerald Kelly, Erik Stinus, K.V. Ramana Redy, M.B. Emeneau John, G. Leonard, M.N. Roy and Albert Johnson.

The book projects Varada's versatality as a poet, play-wright, story writer, Journalist and his varied interests. The well known journalist Mr. P. Vaman Rao reacting to the news of

his death, says, "To me it is all like a dream or a phantasmagoria of a sweet as well as frightful dream."

Mr. Rau's article on 'Telugu Literature' in '**Indian Literature**' published by National Academy of Letters has received high acclaim. K.R. Kripalani, the then, Secretary of the Akademi complimented Varada for his "excellent review of one year's progress in Telugu Literature". The review being a master piece written in pages is reprinted in this book.

This 'Varada Smriti' which gives a bird's eyeview of literal (Telugu) happenings of the best part of this century should find a place on every shelf that seeks to equip itself source materials on 'Telugu Literature.'

-B. SUBBARAYAN

---

**'RASAJNA SILPI'** (Telugu) (Acharya Pingali Lakshmikantam's Centenary Souvenir) Publisher Dr. V. Srinivas, Visakhapatnam. Copies can be had from Sri P.S Sundaram 8-3-970, Srinagar Colony Hyderabad - 500 873. Price Rs. 48/-

It is a tastefully got-up, attractive volume of 147 pages containing scholarly articles on the various aspects of Dr. Lakshmikantam's Life, Scholar ship and Poetic genius.



Scholarly articles on his versatility are contributed by Dr. P.S.R. Appa Rao, Sri Balantrapu Rajanikanta Rao, Dr. Nanduri Ramakrishnamacharya, Prof. (Smt) Nayani Krishna Kumari, Dr. Sumana Sri, Nagalla Guru Prasad, Prof. V. Subrahmanya Sastri, Prasadaraya Kulapati, Prof. L. Chakradhara Rao, Prof G.V. Subrahmanyam and others.

The well-written and critical essays show the greatness of the professor who distinguished himself as a teacher, poet, stage actor and literary critic, with many 'Firsts' to his credit. Notwithstanding his varied contributions to Telugu literature, the reader gets the impression that the man is greater than his works. His magnum opus 'Soundaranadam', an all time classic written in partnership with Katuri Venkateswara Rao, is enough to establish his claims to literary innovation and artistry, and to perpetuate his memory.

The printed pages contain photographs, illuminating quotations which reinforce and supplement the contents. The professor's photograph on the laminated cover page looks life-like.

I hope, this book will find its place on the shelves of all libraries.

-I.V. CHALAPATI RAO

**TELUGU SAHITYAMULO RADHA TATVAMU** by Dr. Anantha Lakshmi; Paper back Edition Rs. 90/-. For copies: Author, 1-9-327/1, Ramnagar Gundu, Hyderabad-500044. **Telugu Sahitya-mulo Radha Tatvamu** (Concept of Radha in Telugu Literature) is the doctoral dissertation of Dr. Anantha Lakshmi, a well documented work that can be a source book to any research on Radha.

Radha's name is synonymous with love for Krishna- sensual or spiritual. Radha-Krishna symbolise the **advaita** doctrine. **Gamhita, Padma purana and Brahma Samhita** emphasise their non-duality. Radha Krishna concept is a symbiosis of **saguna** and **nirguna** modes of worship.

At the outset the author traces the etymological significance of **Radha**. She amply demonstrates her commendable authority on the subject through the exposition of the characters of Radha and Krishna in relation to **yogasastra**, numerology and astronomy. Radha symbolically represents the seeker's spiritual odyssey from **Gneya** (known) to **agneya** (unknown) culminating in the realisation of Him- through sublime love.

Radha's unsurpassable devotion to Krishna as perceived and portrayed by Jayadeva, Chaitanya, Nimbarka, Surdas and others provides an interesting back drop for the study undertaken by the author.

**Radhika Svantanamu** of Muddupalani tops the list of Telugu



**Kavyas** which distort the love of Radha as sensual with **Panduranga Mahatmyamu** and **Ashtamahishi kalyanam** being the exceptions.

Radha's emergence on the firmament of Telugu drama is relatively recent one. Telugu **Bhagavatam** seems to have influenced a majority of the plays as evidenced by the presence of many memorable scenes from the classic. Panuganti's play **Radha Krishna** redeems Radha from a profusion of distortions in the portrayal of her character by many dramatists. While depicting the sensual love of Radha as portrayed by such writers, Dr. Anantha Lakshmi displays remarkable restraint.

In contrast, Telugu lyrics and ballads eulogise the spiritual love of Radha and glorify her in no uncertain terms. There seems to be a near unanimity among the writers in eloquently singing in praise of Radha's love for Krishna.

The author of the book under review pays glowing tributes to the modern Telugu poets who have successfully presented the multi-faceted personality of Radha.

The last chapter summarises the admirable endeavour of Dr. Anantha Lakshmi in providing a new perspective to the concept of Radha. As Dr. I. Panduranga Rao, Executive Director, Bharatiya Jnanpith, rightly points out in his thought provoking 'Foreword' such critical assessments as this enable ordinary reader to acquire a more refined out look. **-T.S. CHANDRA MOULI**

**SCHOOLIKI POTHUNNA NENU**  
(స్కూలికి పోతున్న నేను) OOTLA KONDAYYA

Pages : 32, Price : Rs. 9, Publishers,  
Katuri Kavita Peetham, Kutbiguda,  
Hyderabad-500 027.

This slim book of 32 pages and 27 elegant poems is a welcome addition to our rather limited literature in Telugu for children. Sri Ootla Kondayya Garu is a veteran in this field, having over a dozen books to his credit, most of them, unfortunately, not available now. However, 'Schooliki Pothunna Nenu' is unique in its own way.

Books for children are mostly didactic in content and message, adults prescribing several 'dos and donts' for the kids. But now the roles are reversed; it is the child that speaks. As a grandfather, Kondayya Garu is aware that children are often critical observers of adults' behaviour around them, reacting in all their innocence. But when the child speaks out, it is snubbed and it is puzzled;

అడిగితే పెద్ద మాటలు అంటావు

అదగ కుంటే మూగమొద్దంటావు

Why? asks the child. The father is not happy with mother's cooking. The child wonders why? The answer comes



from the mother and the kid is happy;

హోటల్లో దూరి మెక్కివస్తే  
ఆకలిగాక అట్లా అంటావు

Again the child is not able to figure out why human infants are bottle-fed while even dogs breast-feed their off-springs.

చిన్నపాపకి మావదినమ్మయితే  
సీసాతో పాలిస్తుంది

The poems move on from one such

situation to another. The diction is simple and appealing with a touch of humour. Now and then one finds the child speaking much beyond its age;

ఏమిచేశారు ఏసుక్రీస్తుని -  
ఏమిచేశారు గాంధీమహాత్ముని  
చంపివేశారు బ్రిటికి వుండగా -  
చచ్చినాక చేశారు దేవుళ్ళుని

These poems have as much for the adult as for the child to learn.

— Dr. B. Dayananda Rao

## CONTRIBUTORS ! PLEASE NOTE !

Contributors who send articles for publication, are requested to make them as brief as possible, at any rate not exceeding 4 fullscap size sheets type-written on one side on double space. They should send two copies. Faintly printed xerox copies will make reading difficult. An undertaking may accompany the article to add that the articles does not involve copy-right infringement.

Authors who send their books for review may kindly note that they should send two copies. One of them will go to the reviewer and one will remain with the Editor. They should also note the name of the place or person from whom copies can be had.

**I.V. Chalapati Rao**

*Editor*

HIG II B4\F10 Bagh Lingampally  
Hyderabad - 500 044.



## WHO'S WHO AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

**Smt. Avabai B. Wadia :** President, Family Planning Association of India; Immediate Past President and Patron, Internatinonal Planned Parenthood Assiciation.

**Kum. B. Girija Bai :** Editor, NSIET Journal, Hyderabad.

**Dr. C. Narayana Reddy :** Telugu Poet; Retired Professor, Osmania University; "Bharatiya Jnan Peeth Awardee. Recipient of Padma Bhushan award".

**Dr. Ch. Rajendra Prasad :** Reader and Head of Department of English, Y.N. College Narsapur.

**Dr. B. Parvati :** Reader in English, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam.

**Dr. K. Meera Bai :** Lecturer in English, Kurnool.

**Sri Vemaraju Narasimha Rao :** Writer in Telugu and English; President Navya Sahiti Samiti and Navya Nataka Samiti; Past President, Y's Men International, India Area; Rtd. Municipal Commissioner (Spl. Grade).

**Mr. Andrew Cohen :** American Spiritual Teacher; Born in New York. Began teaching in 1986 and after a profound awakening transformed his life.

**Sri K. Yadagiri :** Lecturer in English; Post Graduate Centre, Nirmal.

**Sri Sridhar and Ms. Alladi Usha :** Faculty Members of the University of Hyderabad.

**Dr. C. Jacob :** Retired as District & Sessions Judge; a Poet.

**Prof. R.K. Singh :** A Professor in the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad (Bihar).

**Sri Peddibhotla Subbaramiah :** A scholar and writer in Telugu.

**Dr. S. Sanjeeva Dev :** Poet, Painter, and Scholar; There was an exhibition of his paintings in the US.

**Sri Ramesh K. Sree :** Lecturer and Research Scholar, Y.N. College, Narsapur.

**Smt. A. Satyavathi :** Poet; Lecturer in Mahboobia College for Women, Hyd.

**Sri V. Rama Rao :** Lecturer in English, S.K.V.T. College, Rajahmundry.

**Dr. M. Venkateswara Rao :** Lecturer in English, S.V.J. College, Tirupati.

**Sri E. Suresh Kumar :** Lecturer, Dept. of English, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

**Dr. T. Asoka Rani :** Reader in English, Sri Padmavathy Women's University, Tirupati.

**Sri M. Pattabhi Ram :** Deputy Editor, The Hindu, Madras.

**Dr. D. Anjaneyulu :** Journalist and Author; Former President of the Madras Press Club; Associate Editor of TRIVENI.



TRIPLE STREAM

## Editorial

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF  
LITERATURE

When Alexander conquered Persia, his soldiers collected lot of booty which included very precious articles. Among them was a golden casket studded with diamonds and other precious stones. When his soldiers suggested that it could be used to carry his wine, he turned down the proposal and said that such a valuable possession should be respectfully used as container for Homer's '*Iliad*' and for no other purpose. Such was Alexander's respect for literature. We hear it said that several men wept because there were no more books of their favourite authors to read. R. L. Stevenson mentions a gentleman who had read all the works of Carlyle winding up with the ten volumes of '*Frederick the Great*'. "What", cried the gentleman in despair, "Is there no more Carlyle? Am I left to the daily news papers?" We do sympathise with the reader who really reached the end of his pleasure.

The same disappointment is expressed by the authors in similar circumstances. When Gibbon had finished writing '*the History of the Roman Empire*' he felt a "sober melancholy" that he had to part from his literary labours. Like the quicility of mercy literature is a two-fold blessing and it blesses the producer and the consumer.

General Foxe, the hero of Quebec, appreciated Gray's poem 'ELEGY' so much that he said "I am prepared to exchange my glory as the conqueror of

Quebec with the authorship of Gray's 'Elegy'. In the words of Mathew Arnold "Gray walked into the Walhalla of Immortals with his slender volume of poems". Duke of Marlborough, the hero of the Battle of Blenheim paid a rich compliment while acknowledging his debt to Shakespeare. He said "My knowledge of English History is derived from Shakespeare's Historical plays."

At the end of his synoptic survey and penetrating analysis of Shakespeare's plays, Guy Boas, the literary critic, says. "The glories of the Armada and Waterloo may be repeated, but the marvels of '*Hamlet*' and '*Othello*' can never be repeated". Macaulay who used to speak "quite printed words" even as a child, committed to memory John Bunyon's '*Pilgrim's progress*' and all the books of Milton's *Paradise lost* and undertook to reproduce them if they were destroyed by any act of vandalism.

Such instances are galore in the case of our own Indian literature. Poets and writers in all ages and languages were held in high esteem in our own country. Kalidasa is the crown-jewel in the diadem of Indian literature.

Books are keys to wisdom's treasure

Books are gates to lands of pleasure

Books are paths that upward lead

Books are friends - Come let us read.

- EMILE PAULSON



Obviously, this is a reference to the books of literature and a poetic statement of the benefits of reading them. A library is not only a treasure-house of ideas but a power house of knowledge. It is said that a public library is a people's university in the sense that one could get a lot of information and knowledge by reading the right kind of books. Norman K. Henderson, the renowned educationist, said "students come to a college to read for a degree but not to be lectured into one". What he meant by this comment was that education should not be merely lecture-based and teacher-paced. It should encourage extensive and intensive reading. All the education commissions appointed by the Government have pointed out that reading is neglected in all stages of education and the products of our centres of learning are deficient in practical and productive skills of 'thinking' and 'communication'. These skills are largely promoted by the reading of good literature - prose and poetry.

A library may be a collection of books but reading requires a selection. All books of literature are not equally good. Some are like chocolates, peppermints and pastries which please the palate and titillate the senses. Some are like whole-some meals containing vitamins, proteins, carbohydrates, minerals etc., in proper calories. They nourish the mind and invigorate the intellect. No human being can subsist on a continuous diet of confectionery. They may be all-right for momentary

pleasure but health demands a balanced diet provided by eating nutritious food. Good literature provides such nutritious food to the mind, the intellect and the soul.

Literature is the mother of fine arts because it paints a landscape in a few words, carves a statue in a phrase, moulds a melody on a single page and builds character in all its architectural beauty. The literary artist's workmanship in prose depends on the choice of words, sentence construction and paragraph development. Somebody humorously called literature "a trick of words". It is what is "oft thought but never so-well expressed". That is why, Carlyle defined prose as "Words in their best order" and poetry as "the best words in their best order". Jonathan Swift defined style as proper words in proper places. I. Brown would like to add to it "proper thoughts in proper order. While 'grammar' is concerned with the grammatical rules and syntax, 'usage' is concerned with the language practices approved by the educated people.

Often, literature and vocabulary go hand in hand. The author skillfully selects from his armoury of words and structures them elegantly. It is only by words we impart ideas to others. Dr. John Dewey said "Thought is impossible without words". Disraeli, the famous Prime Minister of Great Britain said, "With words we govern men". "Words are the dress of thoughts" said Lord Chesterfield, "Words are the voice of



## TRIPLE STREAM

7

the heart" said, Confucius. "Words are the soul's ambassadors" said Howel. Verbs are the locomotives of action. Nouns are the bricks of thoughts. Adjectives and adverbs throw colouring on our sentences. Thus, words are the literary artist's stock-in-trade and literature is manipulation of words which are linked to the subtleties and nuances of thought and ideas. Outstanding writers are wordsmiths, phrase-makers, and sentence-spinners.

There are several uses of literature:

Literature is a means of living communication. The style with its literary flavour infuses life into the dry bones of factual information. When we read the novels and essays of the authors of good standing, we find that what is true and important is also made clear and delightful. Every-day experiences and matter-of-fact events are invested with a beauty all their own. In English literature novelists like Goldsmith, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Hardy, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Meredith, Faulkner, Saul Bellow, Somerset Maugham (not to speak of more modern writers) each of them has a style of his or her own. One is struck with a bewildering diversity of prose-styles. The reader goes through the book with absorbing interest. He acquires a wide vocabulary which improves his communication skills.

There are standard writers like Bacon, Johnson, Goldsmith, R.L. Stevenson, Hazlitt, Lamb, Lucas, Hillaire Belloc, A.L. Gardiner, Stephen

Leacock, Chesterfield, O'Henry, whose essays and vocabulary, style and usage, one should carefully study. By means of extensive reading of standard works, one arrives at one's own technique and command over language.

As a vehicle of pleasure literature has its wonderful use. In moments of gloom and depression we obtain relief and comfort by reading Shakespeare's Comedies, Moliere's plays, books of Wodehouse, Leacock, Northcote Parkinson, Bernard Shaw and such entertaining authors. One can forget one's cares and sorrows and relax in the company of authors of light literature and poetry. Even light literature gives light.

As a tool for value orientation and culture transmission, literature has immense usefulness. Good books make good men and great books produce great men. Wisdom cannot be told, values cannot be taught and culture cannot be created and spread by an Act of Parliament. Values like truth, honesty, justice, generosity, sacrifice etc., cannot be promoted by precepts. By exemplary lives of noble characters ordinary men are influenced and inspired. Certain situations, conduct and heroic behaviour of characters in drama and fiction make a lasting impact on the lives of readers. There is great truth in what Gandhiji said, "My life is my message". Gandhiji confessed that he was greatly influenced by the books of Tolstoy, Thoreau and the scriptures of all religions. As Milton said books of literature are certainly "the precious life blood of the master's spirit". They are not merely "machines



to think with" or pegs to hang one's thoughts upon.

As a medium of education, literature is indispensable. We cannot teach language without literature being its content. If advanced language teaching is to be effective, there must be content of relevant literature.

Besides, literature opens a social world and serves as a window to the study of modern life as well as the thought and habits of our fore-fathers. It leads to national integration and international understanding. To-day the nations of the world are brought closer through their literature. He is a poor writer who writes only for one country.

Poetry is the top fruit in the colourful basket of literature and culture is the test of a nation's civilisation and the poets like Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton, and Kalidasa are considered to be the standard-bearers of their country's culture. Ofcourse, poetic diction is not intended for our daily use, business deals and social transactions, because the language of poetry is the organised violation of the rules of grammar. Its expression is off the beaten track and the established grooves. Careful study and scholarly guidance are prerequisites for understanding the complexity and sophistication of the language of higher poetry. Abbot wrote a special grammar and Cunliffe wrote a special dictionary

for Shakespeare. That is why T.S. Eliot called poetry a "superior amusement." It is the most prestigious form of literature for promoting higher sensibility, aesthetic sense and ethical values. Poetry makes statements memorable and quotable.

All things considered, literature is not merely an escape from life but a voyage into life in all its rhythms. It is often a mirror of life and at times develops into a critical explanation of 'living' involving extent, possibilities and quality of life as well as depth of experience. If a poet describes a mountain, he must have seen at least a hillock. If he describes an ocean he must have seen at least a pond! Without poetry life is drab and lack-lustre. As such, true education may be defined as what happens to a person (after graduating) when he is alone with a book interacting with the author.

Finally, literature opens the golden gates of spiritual realisation. Higher literature shepherds us into the joyous regions of serenity and the fourth state of consciousness which is physiologically different from the three known major states of consciousness - wakefulness, sleep and dreaming. It is a fusion of the alertness of the wakeful state and the restfulness of sleep. It is akin to the state of meditation which facilitates a free and fictionless flow of creative intelligence and infinite joy - the fulfilment of a divine mission.

**I. V. CHALAPATI RAO**  
Editor.



# A NOTE ON PADMAVATHI'S POETRY

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

(*Harindranath Chattopadhyaya used to tell us about the great poetry of a little girl who died when she was 16. Padmavathi wrote exquisite poetry comparable to that of Toru Dutt who walked into the Walhalla of immortals when she was just slip of a girl. Padmavathi's total out put was 10 poems.*) -Editor

I have in my possession a typed manuscript of verse written between July, 1917 and June, 1918, by our young poetess who left us, at the tender age of sixteen, in the first week of May, 1920. While she still lived, her exquisitely beautiful poem, "A Lament" was published in the first number of Shama's, which she was not destined even to see.

"Stars of midnight, sing my dirge  
In stillness of the lonely sky  
Sad be the strain of life's  
farewell  
Yet mourn not long...."

And the stars of midnight heard the prophet-voice within her soul and responded to her call.

Padmavathi was essentially a young mystic. Her utterances, though often uncertain and even incomplete, were still significant of a soul that was continually verging upon the dark night of mystics. Most of her verse is coloured with a sad strange feeling of "I want" ness and infused with the melancholy music of the "thirst for far-away things."

"Pain, thou companion ever of

me.

Wilt thou abide with me for ever?"

She questions that Being of whom AWE made a God. But there is invariably a flash of optimism with which she relieves the cloud-heaps of her life. It is the optimism of mystical girl-soul, who, learning to hug the jewel of pain to herself, discovers that it is many-coloured.

"Though bitter at first, I learn to love thee,

But when I love thee, lo! thou fliest

To make way for some unseen joy,"

The dedicatory poem strikes a wistful note with an almost poignant clarity:

"Years and years will flit, my friend,

Years of toil, and struggling years ;

One message across time I send  
To wake dead Memory, my friend.

This message of my silent tears."

Bearing this message in mind and always remembering that it is the message of the bud whose outer form faded before it could open its leaves to the light of day, we shall find much in the poetry of Padmavati, which will enable us to comprehend the souls of thousands of young women still among



us, who ache for expression and yearn to give us their individual message.

Padmavati's poem "*To a friend*" (written on the 19th February, 1918), throbs with the pantheistic mood in which poetess seem to be in communion with the Spirit behind all things, that which Yeats calls, "Eternal Spirit wandering on her way." And words, which are, after all, beggars, can silence. The moment such a mood passes into words, it becomes a parody of its own Beauty ... and Padmavati felt this intuitively when she wrote :

"How I love to sit with thee  
O Sister ! on my balcony  
And the dim sea that stretches  
far ...  
I yearn to tell thee all I feel  
About the star, the sea, the sky,  
But thoughts, like winged birds  
do fly ...  
In swift succession, lo! they come  
...  
The words are long ! ...,

There is also a strange yearning to be felt in her verse for this secret Beauty behind tangibility, and it is to Nature that she makes her girl's appeal :

"Wild Wind! bear me on thy wing  
To far-off lands where thou dost  
roam  
To floral beds of dewy Spring ...  
O take me to thy whirlwind-  
home  
Waft me across the deep blue

sea,

Where rosy shells with wavelets  
dance,

To fleecy clouds, O carry me,  
And into heaven's wide  
expanse."

The first verse is full of Blakean simplicity, and in the last line of the second verse we stand face to face with a genuine hunger of the finite for infinity. It is poetry of a high order and the utterance of a soul that was capable of responding to the mystical voice of Nature. Somewhere she has exclaimed, "Nature owns me. I am her child," and goes on to tell us -

"Then I roam

Among my comrades, Flower and  
Tree."

The expression is as simple and as strong as the life of an ascetic. It is verse of such quality that compels us to acknowledge Padmavati as a true poet, as one of the few poets of India who have written in a foreign tongue.

Sometimes, Padmavati wrote as if she had been a woman of fifty ... full of conviction, full of experience, full of crystalline judgment ...

"Art thou faithful in thy love?  
Then thou art from heaven  
above  
Art thou fickle in thy mirth?  
Then thou art a child of earth ...  
If hatred be thy course ... Ah  
well !  
Then thou art from the depths of



## A NOTE ON PADMAVATHI'S POETRY

11

Hell. "

One can hardly give more than a very faint idea as to the work left to us by this young poetess of sixteen. It is with pride that I have accepted to edit her work, and I feel sure that when a good Anthology of Indo-Anglian poets and petesses is made, she will be included among them. For indeed, Padmavati's message deserves to go into the world as the companion of the messages already sent to it by Toru Dutt and by Sarojini Devi.

We now take the liberty of quoting a few poems from the collection which I have with me, and which, I hope, will be given to the world in a printed volume, at no distant date.

"On a happy summer morn  
While dew lay on the corn  
In the heart of a happy bird  
A sweet song stirred " ...

\*\*\*\*\*

It sang....

"The sun doth rise and shine  
above ...

The roses bloom so fresh and  
gay ...

Wake up, wake up from slumber,  
love !

And smile on me as smiles the  
day.

Together we'll fly, along the sky  
In search of a land all sunny  
bright ...

Together we' will circle high

To prove the youthful earth's  
delight."

\*\*\*\*\*

The sun was setting in the West,  
The night was creeping ... deep  
dark night ...

Above the tall palmyra's crest  
The evening star shone clear and  
bright,

Then sighed a lone bird on the  
tree,

In sad bird-loneliness it said --  
"O Bird ! O Bird ! come back to  
me

How shall I live when thou art  
dead ?

My bird ! alone I sit and moan  
Death has divided thee from me  
In unknown worlds thou fliest  
alone

Say ! dost thou ever think of me"?

\*\*\*\*\*

While evening breezes pass me  
by,

And in the lonely clouded sky  
The lightnings flash a while and  
die,

I sit and think of thee ...

O! dost thou ever think of me ?

When the rain doth wet the tree  
Nestless thou abroad dost roam.

In my heart I make a home  
Bird ! for thy sad memory.



Dost thou ever think of me ?  
 Oft in silent moon-lit nights  
 The branches stand like ghosts  
 aghast  
 I see thy shadow fleeting past  
 Above the heights.  
 It is then that I sit and think of  
 thee ...  
 Dost thou ever think of me ?

\*\*\*\*\*

Dost thou ever think of me ?  
 While the evening's winds are  
 blowing  
 And across the sky and tree  
 The lightnings ...

#### DAY AND NIGHT

Day: Night, O dark and cruel  
 night !

Chase me not on swift black  
 wings

Let me view the sunset bright  
 Lo ! my lyre her farewell sings.  
 Wrapt the earth in twilight lies  
 Fades the flower so sad so sweet  
 To have me back my lotus cries,  
 One farewell, O! let me greet.  
 Night : O! smiling happy fleeting  
 day  
 Thy happy hours so swift they  
 fly.

The birds, they sing their songs  
 so gay,  
 The sun doth shine in clear blue  
 sky .

Yet linger on while twilight  
 fades...

O, Let my woeful mantle cling  
 To the dark and lonely -lighted  
 glades

Where my nightingale doth sing.

#### GOOD -BYE

A gust of wind across the sea  
 Blows through the midnight sky.  
 A farewell echo it sound to me ...

Is that your good-bye?

Not good-bye yet, my only dear !

Too soon it is from you.

I can return a tear on tear,

But not my last adieu.

"A day may come when these  
 glad days

As lightning that hath pierced  
 the cloud

May vanish ...

Ah ! then one boon I ask of thee;

When they lay me in my shroud

One little word to my sister say

I knew her just for one short  
 day. "

(14th December, 1921.)





# SEAMUS HEANEY

## A Tribute to the Nobel laureate 1995

— Y. Satya Sree

This year's Nobel prize for literature is awarded to the Irish poet, translator and essayist Mr. Seamus Heaney. The Swedish Academy of Letters which announces the prize, mentioned in its citation that the prestigious award was given to this great poet "for his great works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and living past". The fabulous prize money is worth 7.2 million Kronor (\$1 million) which is a record amount in the 94-year history of the Nobel Prize. Mr. Heaney will be honoured on December 10th along with other 1995 laureates at a special function at Stockholm.

Ironically, when this award was announced, Mr. Heaney was holidaying with his wife in Greece and The Swedish Academy tried in vain for 27 hours to contact and inform him about the award he had won. A long while after this futile exercise, they came to know that he was somewhere in Greece. Without losing further time they sought the help of the Greek embassy and faxed his photographs to all the police stations in Greece as they generally do for a 'wanted man'. Finally it so transpired that when Mr. Heaney himself made a casual call

to his brother Mr. Chris Heaney, the good news was conveyed to him. In the first instance Mr. Heaney refused to believe it, because on many of the earlier occasions, there has been speculation in this regard which ended in disappointment. As it was too good to believe, he dismissed it as a joke. Mr. Chris had to confirm that the news was actually published in the front pages of all news papers.

Perhaps Mr. Heaney is one of the very few poets who are widely known all over Britain. He is fondly referred to as "Famous Seamus" by his fans and the reading public. He is so popular that people stop him on the streets for an autograph. It is a rare phenomenon since poets are seldom recognised in Europe which is dominated by the pull of the market forces.

Mr. Heaney is a versatile poet, essayist, critic and translator. He was born in 1939 in the North of Ireland in county Derry. He is an Irish Catholic. He studied B.A., literature at Queen's University at Belfast. After completing his studies, he was happily married to the novelist Marie Delvin, a writer in her own right. He has been living



Dost thou ever think of me ?  
 Oft in silent moon-lit nights  
 The branches stand like ghosts  
 aghast  
 I see thy shadow fleeting past  
 Above the heights.  
 It is then that I sit and think of  
 thee ...  
 Dost thou ever think of me ?

\*\*\*\*\*

Dost thou ever think of me ?  
 While the evening's winds are  
 blowing  
 And across the sky and tree  
 The lightnings ...

#### DAY AND NIGHT

Day: Night, O dark and cruel  
 night !  
 Chase me not on swift black  
 wings  
 Let me view the sunset bright  
 Lo ! my lyre her farewell sings.  
 Wrapt the earth in twilight lies  
 Fades the flower so sad so sweet  
 To have me back my lotus cries,  
 One farewell, O! let me greet.  
 Night : O! smiling happy fleeting  
 day  
 Thy happy hours so swift they  
 fly.

The birds, they sing their songs  
 so gay,  
 The sun doth shine in clear blue  
 sky .  
 Yet linger on while twilight  
 fades...  
 O, Let my woeful mantle cling  
 To the dark and lonely -lighted  
 glades  
 Where my nightingale doth sing.

#### GOOD -BYE

A gust of wind across the sea  
 Blows through the midnight sky.  
 A farewell echo it sound to me ...  
 Is that your good-bye?  
 Not good-bye yet, my only dear !  
 Too soon it is from you.  
 I can return a tear on tear,  
 But not my last adieu.

"A day may come when these  
 glad days  
 As lightning that hath pierced  
 the cloud  
 May vanish ...  
 Ah ! then one boon I ask of thee;  
 When they lay me in my shroud  
 One little word to my sister say  
 I knew her just for one short  
 day. "

(14th December, 1921.)





# SEAMUS HEANEY

## A Tribute to the Nobel laureate 1995

— Y. Satya Sree

This year's Nobel prize for literature is awarded to the Irish poet, translator and essayist Mr. Seamus Heaney. The Swedish Academy of Letters which announces the prize, mentioned in its citation that the prestigious award was given to this great poet "for his great works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and living past". The fabulous prize money is worth 7.2 million Kronor (\$1 million) which is a record amount in the 94-year history of the Nobel Prize. Mr. Heaney will be honoured on December 10th along with other 1995 laureates at a special function at Stockholm.

Ironically, when this award was announced, Mr. Heaney was holidaying with his wife in Greece and The Swedish Academy tried in vain for 27 hours to contact and inform him about the award he had won. A long while after this futile exercise, they came to know that he was somewhere in Greece. Without losing further time they sought the help of the Greek embassy and faxed his photographs to all the police stations in Greece as they generally do for a 'wanted man'. Finally it so transpired that when Mr. Heaney himself made a casual call

to his brother Mr. Chris Heaney, the good news was conveyed to him. In the first instance Mr. Heaney refused to believe it, because on many of the earlier occasions, there has been speculation in this regard which ended in disappointment. As it was too good to believe, he dismissed it as a joke. Mr. Chris had to confirm that the news was actually published in the front pages of all news papers.

Perhaps Mr. Heaney is one of the very few poets who are widely known all over Britain. He is fondly referred to as "Famous Seamus" by his fans and the reading public. He is so popular that people stop him on the streets for an autograph. It is a rare phenomenon since poets are seldom recognised in Europe which is dominated by the pull of the market forces.

Mr. Heaney is a versatile poet, essayist, critic and translator. He was born in 1939 in the North of Ireland in county Derry. He is an Irish Catholic. He studied B.A., literature at Queen's University at Belfast. After completing his studies, he was happily married to the novelist Marie Delvin, a writer in her own right. He has been living



in Dublin since 1976. He is a member of the Irish Academy of Letters and a visiting professor in rhetoric at the prestigious Harvard University since 1982. From 1989 to 1994 he taught poetry at Oxford. Now he divides his time between Harvard and Dublin. Mr. Heaney is the third Irish man to win the World's most coveted award for literature, the other two being William Butler Yeats (1923) and Samuel Beckett (1969).

Even in his school life he showed glimpses of his poetic talent. Mr. Heaney contributed his first poems to the university literary magazine while he was at the college and published them under the pseudonym 'Incertus' which means 'Uncertain'. He hesitated to reveal his name because, at that stage, he had "no sense of a poem as a whole structure". He was trying to master the technique of writing poetry even from that early age. Later, when he worked as a lecturer in Queen's University, he published his very first collection of poems "The Death of a Naturalist" which became an instantaneous success.

His early poems were written on familiar themes like nature, childhood memories etc. A poem written on frogs expresses the boy's fear towards this grotesque creature.

*"Right down the dam, gross - bellied frogs  
were cocked  
on sods; their loose necks pulsed  
like sails. Some hopped  
The slap and plop were obscene  
threats. Some sat  
poised like mud grenades, their  
blunt heads farting".*

The first book 'The Death of a Naturalist' won him many prestigious awards like Somerset Maugham Award, Eric Gregory and Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize. His earlier anthologies include poems on Irish potato diggers, peat bog cutters, wood cutters and farmers who plough the field with horses. He expressed his view that all these hard-working hewers of wood and drawyers of water were exploited in many ways and abandoned to their fate. They are "technology victims" says the poet. There is high visibility of Robert Forest's influence on Heaney as is evident in these poems, especially those dealing with nature. He byhearted the poems of Wordsworth and Keats in the initial stages of writing poetry as though he served his apprenticeship under those romantic poets. He thus learnt the art of "management of meter, rhythm, diction and verbal texture".

His most important works are *Death of a Naturalist*, *Door into Dark*, *Wintering out*, *Field work*, *Poems (65-75)*, *Selected poems*, *Preoccupations (essays)*, *Station*



*Island, Room to Rhyme, Boy Driving his Father to Confession, Land, Servant Boy, The Haw Lantern, The Cure at Troy (a play), Seeing things and The Government of the Tongue. A prolific output, indeed!*

'Station Island' is perhaps a worthy master piece. It is considered to be one of the most significant poems of our times. It has provided grist for the mills of many critics. This poem is about an island called LoDerg and the things that happen on it.

The present-day world is troubled with many conflicts connected with religion, language and politics. Unless we find the root cause for all these problems and try to eliminate it, the disocrd and blood-shed will never end. Heaney suggests a remedy for these problems in his poem 'Digging'. 'Digging' was his very first poem, published in 1965. In this poem he draws a parallel between his father's shovel and his own open.

*"Between my finger and thumb  
The squat pen rests  
I'll dig with it".*

In 1969 when he read the book 'The log people' written by P.V. Glob, he found in it the photographs of the bodies of men and women who belonged to the iron age, preserved in the logs of Denmark. They were the victims of a ritual. Heaney found many similarities in the religious worship of

both the countries, Denmark and Ireland. This ritual had its origin in the ancient Viking culture in offering humar sacrifice to propitiate Mother Goddess. Thus Heaney found the link between the past fury and the present terrorism in his country, Ireland. This made him think and thus came out two of his finest poems "Wintering Out" and "North". In the latter he makes a reference to the terrorism in the following lines :

*How we slaughter  
for the common good.*

As an Irish Catholic he speaks about violence in his country, quotes the Swedish Academy, "In his opinion, the fact that there has been unwillingness on both sides to speak out - even about manifest injustices - has been of great importance in the explosive development (in Northern Ireland)".

He was obviously touched by the unending conflict and continuing blood shed in Ireland which is caused by the hatred between the Catholics and the Protestants. Mr. Heaney's poems are thought provoking and they leave a profound impact on the minds of the readers. He strongly believes that peace should prevail in his country, and in the world and that people should practice tolerance and live in amity, forgetting their differences and overcoming their baser passions and animosities.





## Short Story

# WHEN HUMANISM FLOWERED

— Govindaraju Sita Devi

It was already nine in the night. Those meetings in the City Central Library never started on time. That day too, as usual, they started the literary meeting rather late and ended up further late. The people who attended it already started dispersing in groups of twos and threes, some in cars, some on scooters and others walked along.

I wanted to ask Bhagavathi for a lift. Her house was beyond mine. She pretended not to have seen me and drove away. I looked at the watch. It was nine-thirty. I glanced around. Not one acquaintance anywhere around.

The children would have gone to bed already, probably without food. My husband would be impatient for my not reaching home even by the time of going to bed. Not that he imposed his will on me. He was particular that I reached home before nine thirty. These were evil times, he would say.

Whenever I attended these literary gatherings, I always looked at my watch and left immediately after the main speakers finished and caught an auto or a bus. That day, I forgot to consult the watch. The speakers too held the

listeners spell-bound. Nobody was aware of the passage of time. Which was rather very rare. And there I was, all alone.

I walked briskly upto the main road, where generally conveyance of some sort was available. There was no auto, not even a rickshaw anywhere within sight. Even if a rickshaw were available, I would have gone upto Narayanguda and taken a bus, though it would take some more time.

After waiting for about twenty minutes, there was one auto cruising towards me.

"Brother, Panjagutta?" I asked.

He nodded in refusal, went forward and stopped.

"These Hyderabad autodrivers are always rude!" I cursed them. Another auto rushed past even without slowing down, followed by four others in a procession. It was nearing ten and I was restless.

Shops were downing their shutters and pedestrians were becoming scarce.

I cursed myself for having come to the meeting for the hundredth time.



## WHEN HUMANISM FLOWERED

17

Another auto slowed down.

"Panjagutta, brother!"

"Five rupees over the meter" he demanded.

There were two young men squeezed on either side of him.

"It's O.K. But who are they?" I pointed to them.

He flagged down and said "Please get in!"

The two young fellows in the front sang along "Come, Come, please get in!"

I did not like their looks. They looked seedy. I had to reach home somehow, early.

I saw a rickshaw coming at a distance.

"Sorry. I don't need an auto now" I said hastily.

"Why don't you get in?" One of the two started coming towards me. They were signalling to each other. I was scared that they might drag me inside, if I persisted.

At that moment, the previous driver, who refused initially, and was watching all along, came near me.

"Madam, come on! Let us go in my auto" he said.

The youth got down from the auto and uttered an obscenity and came near him aggressively. The driver gave him a powerful push and he went back reeling.

I did not hesitate any longer. I jumped in and the auto picked up speed. "Panjagutta" I said, as I wetted my parched lips.

As we sped, I heard the youths shouting and yelling at us.

The auto driver was about fifty years of age. I reckoned that he was observing all along the nuisance that was created by the youths, before he stepped in. Thank God, I would be home, inside of half an hour.

As the auto was going over the flyover, he slowed down and looked back. I was still sweating profusely, in spite of the cool breeze across the lake. Other vehicles were zooming past in both directions. My heart picked up courage when they approached and sank as they disappeared.

Literary meetings were my weakness, though I was not myself a writer. I never attempted even to write



a letter to the Editor. I had a weakness for purchasing any new book and reading it. And not missing any literary gatherings in the city. Those meetings gave one an opportunity to get acquainted with other literary personalities and be aware of contemporary literary trends. The teacher in my school said when I was young, that hearing one good speaker was equivalent to reading ten good books. It widened one's horizon, he said. I got immense pleasure in attending those literary gatherings.

As the auto slowed down, the train of my thoughts stopped. He was looking back in anticipation, I turned my head and found the auto with the youths at a distance. My God! They were following us.

My driver shouted. "Bloody rascals" and increased the speed. There was no sound of any one following any more. In another ten minutes the auto stopped at the entrance to the colony. My heart steadied and I was nearer home.

"Madam, you had better get down here" he said. "I would have dropped you at your house, but today, I am in a hurry. I have to go home". He looked at the meter and said "Fifteen rupees".

I handed him a fifty rupee note.

"Brother, you have safely brought me home and I am....." I could not finish. He counted out the notes and returned me the balance. "You may keep the change" I said, but he did not seem to hear.

He gave a wry smile.

"Madam, I am not myself an angel. Today, before a large crowd a bully tried to kidnap my sixteen year old daughter and every one there looked helplessly. It was an old man of seventy years that had the guts to face the bully and save my girl. In the process he was badly hurt. I got him admitted in the hospital and was going home. I waited for a fare towards the old city, when you saw me. Only today, I could grasp the real meaning of what they called human kindness. But for this incident, I would not have brought you here".

"Please go in peace!" he said.

"Brother, those three toughs in the auto! Won't they give you trouble? What if they chase you? Why don't you take another route?" I was concerned about his safety.

He gave a dry laugh. "Madam, we live on the roads. If not today, tomorrow



or the day after. Sometime, somewhere, I will have to face them. Our lives carry a risk always. Now, I have to go home and return to the hospital to stay for the night with that old man. Please don't worry for me. My wife will be expecting me"

He started his vehicle, turned round and left.

My heart was filled with a rare feeling of joy at the flowering of human kindness in that raw soul. There was

also a tinge of sorrow at the prospect of harm to that good samaritan. I prayed for the old man who saved his girl and the driver who saved me from the goons.

I saw my husband approaching from a distance to receive me.

Translated from the Original Telugu  
by

G. Lakshmi Satyavati  
and  
Vemaraju Narasimha Rao

## CONTRIBUTORS ! PLEASE NOTE !

Contributors who send articles for publication, are requested to make them as brief as possible, at any rate not exceeding 4 foolscap size sheets type-written on one side in double space. They should send two copies. Faintly printed xerox copies will make reading difficult. An undertaking may accompany the article to add that the articles does not involve copy-right infringement.

Authors who send their books for review may kindly note that they should send two copies. One of them will go to the reviewer and one will remain with the Editor. They should also note the name of the place or person from whom copies can be had.

**I.V. Chalapti Rao**

Editor

HIG II B4/F10, Bagh Lingampally  
Hyderabad - 500 044.



A Poem

# OUR INDIA

— Dr. C. Jacob

When you see garbage heaped on roads  
And drains and gutters with knee-deep mire,  
And stinking smell your nostrils assails,  
When dirty pigs run gazing your feet,  
When cows and bulls in busy markets  
Tear through crowds and gore you with horns,  
When roads are full of pits and holes  
To pull men down and break their bones,  
When mosquitoes sting you day and night,  
When men and women with swollen legs  
Drag their feet heavily on roads,  
When beggars swarm in trains and buses  
And pester you with shrilling voice,  
When lepers block the roads in bands  
And strand you till you throw a coin,  
When drummers beat and pipers blow  
Day and night for birth and death,  
When frenzied processions block high-ways  
For weddings of gods and demons both,  
When men in queues at waiting lines  
Push like brutes and elbow each other  
Where stray dogs snap at passers by  
And catch their calves and tear their clothes  
Remember my dear, it is our India.





# APTAVAKYAM AS A STRATEGY OF LEARNING

— Dr. P. Subbarayan

Knowledge is universal. In achieving it two different approaches viz. esoteric, and scientific are witnesses. Each approach has its own merits and demerits. Just as a coin has two sides, every established theory has its advantages and disadvantages. As human beings we cannot attain perfection in any endeavour. The best we can do is pooling up the knowledge acquired by different approaches and thereby infer the truth just as the six blind men conceptualised the elephant.

One optimistic trend developed during this century is an attitude to synthesise western and eastern lores. One is empirical, objective and scientific while the other is experimental, intuitive, speculative and subjective. So far, a linguist, a mathematician, a physicist or a psychologist arrived at the conclusion that the east and the west differ only in their approaches. They also felt from their scientific approach that the West missed the benefit of human touch. More over, all could realise that both esoteric and scientific approaches are complementary but not contradictory to each other. Capra (1984) wanted a dynamic inter-play between mystical, intuitive and scientific analysis. Murphy (1962) remarked that both the East and the West are coming close very fast. Orinstain (1972) contended that what the

West missed by training the left hemisphere of the brain alone can only be compensated by following the esoteric methods of training the mind.

The present paper is prepared with a view to supporting the said trend with one more specific case. The theme around which I weave the thread is the process of 'Learning'. Needless to say that learning is universal in both animal and human kingdoms and that there is neither life nor progress in this world without learning.

The history of learning is as old as the life on the earth. Whether philosophers, educationists and psychologists identify, understand, measure, predict or control the process of learning, it goes on. To understand the process of learning countless efforts were made, are being made, and will be made in the East as well as in the West. In the East, mainly traditional ways were in vogue. The understanding and application of learning was inherent in their philosophical enquiries. In the West, at the beginning of the century when efforts began to isolate psychology from philosophy and crown it off as a positive science of behaviour of organisms, the topic of learning appeared on the scene in its full colours. Psychological enquiry upto the sixties was dominated by the study of learning alone! But during the



remainig decades of the century the enthusiasm died. Today, we, the psychologists and the educationists, show vested interest in research on learning.

Notwithstanding the rise or fall of the enthusiasm in learning research, let me consolidate the scene upto date. All in all, we have more than thirty theories of learning developed in the West alone. There may be more theories buried in esoteric psychologies, indogeneous educational systems, religious practices, and eastern philosophies. The western theories of learning can be broadly classified into two big families - S-R conditioning theories and cognitive-field theories. They inherited the two philosophical schools, scientific realism and positive relativism.

S-R conditioning theorists maintain that learning can be understood by S-R bond. The relationship between stimulus and response can be measured, predicted, and controlled. There are differences among these theorists with respect to their emphasis on stimulus, response, bonding, reinforcement or continuity, the organism, the environmental forces and so on. But most of them wedded themselves to one principle that man is nothing more than a machine. They do not allow any change for subjective concepts like awareness, consciousness, introspection etc. More importance is attached to the practice, randomness of trials, drive, need, habit

formation, extinction, discrimination and the like.

The second group of psychologists started with the reaction of the organisms as a whole. They argue for molar behaviour, purpose, insight etc. They define learning as the reorganisation of the perceptual field. They take into account the awareness, consciousness, introspection and other concepts related to subjectivity. Ofcourse, some compromised the two enemy camps and forwarded their learning theories to the best advantage of understanding it.

Very recently, some psychologists could find new trends in explaining the learning. For example developmental psychologists like Piaget and Bruner. The adherents of humanistic psychology like Rogers, and Maslow developed the learning theories with a high degree of human touch. Those psychologists with better sociological ground put forth the social learning theories. Among this group it is worth to mention the names of Dollard and Miller, Rotter, Bandura and Waltairs. The gravity of their theories is that learning is possible by observation and imitation in a social setting, rather than in laboratory conditions.

We can classify the learning theories based on one more criterion. Every psychologist has base in one discipline and tries to develop a theory with the concepts and principles of that subject. In the early



periods philosophers made their learning theories based on the principles of philosophy. For example mental discipline, a perception and self-actualisation theories. Watson, Pavlov, Bolles and others developed biological models. Hull's model is mathematical and he imitates Newton, while Estes model is statistical. Wertheimer, Kohler and Koffka Gestalts and others based their theory on perceptual laws. Lewin borrowed the concepts of physics and chemistry. Bandura used the sociological approaches. As such there is a change for me to discover a learning strategy based on the Indian philosophy.

I would like to suggest that learning by verbal instruction is very important in animal and human learning. Its role is changing the behaviour is direct, simple and effective. It is not at all an over statement if we say that most of the stock of knowledge of human beings is possible not by perception, inference or imitation but by verbal testimony. Dollard and Miller hinted at the same. Bandura supported its importance.

The nature, importance, mechanism, significance and applications of learning by verbal testimony were identified, developed, felt and applied in India about two to three thousand years back. Learning by verbal testimony was developed by Indian philosophers who were mainly theistic, orthodox, speculative, subjective, intuitive and religious.

Epistemology of Indian philosophy, like any other epistemologies is concerned with the nature of knowledge, its means, and acquisition. The famous six systems of Indian philosophy all in all accepted six means of acquiring knowledge. They are perception (*pratyaksham*), *anumanam* (inference), analogy (*upama*), *arthapatti* (implication) and *anupadesa* (negation). There was an acute need for them to prove the existence of the ultimate reality, *atman* etc., which are abstract concepts. Perception, inference, analogy, implication, and negation suffer from serious defects and are not fit for teaching abstract concepts. Ultimately they had to depend on *Sabda*. These six means have been named as *pramanam* (to give the meaning of measure, standard, or instrument). They measure, standardise or acquire *pramiti* (i.e. true knowledge) of things.

The words *Sabda pramanam*, *aptavakyam*, *aptopadesah*, *aptavacanam* are Sanskrit synonyms. *Aptavakyam* conveys the idea that the intension of a trust worthy person brings about a change in the knowledge, actions, and/or attitudes, values, and beliefs etc. In terms of modern western psychology we call this change as 'learning'. Thus it is deduced that *aptavakyam* is a learning strategy. In ancient times *Mimamsakas* defined *dharma*, the duty, as those acts or behaviours of individuals as prescribed by the *veda*. In this case the *Veda* is *apta* and the regulation of behaviour of



individuals by *aptavakyam* is learning.

The mechanism of *aptavakyam* learning is based on the psycho-linguistics of verbal conditioning. It can be described as follows. The *apta* communicates his ideas, mostly through sentences. Sentence is nothing but a group of words expressing an intention. The verb in the sentence is very important in the context of *aptavakyam* learning. The verb when used in the injunctive mood (with *lin* suffix in Sanskrit) it conveys five types of meanings viz. command, invitation, permission, politely express a wish, and ask question. The learner from the early stages of life through out his language development gets conditioned to the words in the injunctive mood. He acts automatically when he listens to the verb in the injunctive mood. What action he has to do will be determined by the root of the verb-word. This is the psycho-linguistic principle that is responsible for *aptavakyam* learning.

As to the query who is an *apta*, they defined the term *apta* as one who has real knowledge of things, and who tells the truth. He should have a desire to convey the right thing to the learner. The learner with some degree of belief changes his behaviour in tune with the *apta*'s intention. By the mechanism of stimulus generalisation the learner gets conditioned to any *apta*.

*Aptavakyam* learning like any other learning takes five steps. The first step is an

awareness of the problem. It may be on the part of the learner or *apta*. The second step is the development of a strategy for learning. This may be by the learner himself, or by *apta* or by both. The third step is acceptance of the strategy by the individual. The acceptance may be voluntary on the part of the learner, by persuasion, or by the pressure from the *apta*. The penultimate step in implementation of the strategy by the learner himself or with the *apta*'s guidance. The final step is acquisition of the learning with a sense of accomplishment by the learner as well as by the *apta*.

*Aptavakyam* learning is both a mediating and non-mediating process. It is a natural way of learning because it generally starts with cognitive and ends with affective through cognitive or the vice versa. But some times, like in S-R learning it starts with cognitive and ends with cognitive or affective. However, the order depends upon the individuality of the learner i.e., his intelligence, capability, attitude, interest etc. For an intelligent individual the learning is in its natural course i.e. from cognition.

Learning is caused in the learner by an external force in *aptavakyam* learning and hence it can influence the learner's learning at any stage. As a mediational learning it is pervasive in nature, i.e., ahead of the reciprocal model suggested by Bandura. He balanced the importance of the factors of the learner, and the environment



equally and advocated their reciprocal nature.

*Aptavakyam* learning is a life-long process. Right from the time of birth of child to its death it brings about a change in its personality for eg., the doctor or the prophet may be an *apta* just before the last breath. Through all stages of developments neonatal infancy, baby-hood, child-hood, adolescence, adult-hood and old age, the *apta* changes behaviour of the organism depending upon the characteristics of that particular stage.

*Apavakyam* learning is highly a humanistic model. It is subjective. So it always has an in-built capacity for sympathy, empathy, love for all human feelings. It is the simple, direct, and effective way of learning of attitudes, beliefs, values, interests, emotions and so on.

*Aptavakyam* learning is controlled trial-and-error learning. Where an *apta* guides the individual to associate or contiguity, particular response to the stimulus naturally, the randomness of efforts gets reduced. The individual gets the benefit of avoiding unnecessary, unhealthy and harmful trials. The guess work on the cognitive part is taken care of by the *apta*. The individual had to co-ordinate the muscles only by practice.

*Aptavakyam* learning is a guided

insight. Insight according to Gestalts is transfer that is due to an understanding of basic principles, the modes of attack, or to any other type of non-specific transfer. It is described as sudden, unmistakable and immediate apprehension of the real. It's a spontaneous occurrence of a fertile idea or a reconstruction of the situation. If the individual is intelligent enough, he can understand the problematic situation as a whole and can arrive at a solution by mentally reconstructing the situation. An *apta* can help the individual in cognising the situation, correlating its various parts to comprehend and give meaning to the whole situation. It makes the obtained insight unmistakable and real.

*Aptavakyam* learning is an extended imitation learning. It is essentially a social learning theory because a wide variety of social behaviours are learnt from. Bandura recognised three types of reinforcements : direct external, vocational, and self-administered. *Aptavakyam* learning extends to one more reinforcement named *aptavakyam* reinforcement. Bandura's learning model assumes reciprocal interaction between the learner and the environment. More over, it can act on R overt or implicit, S from any direction directly, R, awareness, or rewarded R++. Hence it is termed as pervading reciprocal inter-action.

*Aptavakyam* learning is at the peak of the humanistic learning. It is the effective



learning to inculcate attitudes, beliefs, and values. The unconditional affection and voluntary service of the *apta* develops self-actualisation tendency in the learners. It is always inclusive of sympathy, empathy, warmth, soothing and love. It can prevent the erosion of human values.

*Aptavakyam* learning has its applications in child-rearing, education, counselling, psycho-therapy, industry etc.

In ancient Indian educational system *aptavakyam* learning has done a good job. Each and every fact need to be learnt by observation, experimentation, and learning strategy to teach many things. In fact, *aptavakyam* operates through holy scriptures, cultural heritage and it is an agency of education. We have many applications of *aptavakyam* learning in education, for eg., deductive method, *heuristic* method, problem solving method, teaching of concepts, inculcation of attitudes, beliefs, values etc.

Counselling is a field where the counsellor makes the individual to identify his own problem, and solve the problem. Though counsellor is the central figure much has to be done by the counsellor himself. The counsellor as an *apta* can produce a healing effect.

In behavioural therapy many things are settled by *aptavakyam*. *Apta's* image,

form, thought, sight, gestures, look, word, injunctive, sentence, explanation, guidance, counselling etc., is a modifier of an individual's behaviour. In any country or religion, most of the mental illhealth cases can be cured by a prophet. The principle behind this curing effect is the *aptavakyam* learning.

I have presented a case for synthesis of eastern and western out-look on 'learning'. Despite my handicaps in terms of resources and exposure I could visualise a concept much in vogue in ancient times and at present. *Aptavakyam* learning is a current flowing behind a vast majority of affairs of learning. We experience its applications in child rearing, practices, education, clinical settings, counselling, industry etc. The *aptavakaym* learning has its firm ground in philosophy, psychology, sociology and culture. I could identify it with my understanding of Indian philosophy, western psychology and their inter-dependency.

Really, we have a gap, even today, in our understanding of learning. As Hill (1977) rightly pointed out we need a learning theory covering the following aspects -

1. Ideally covering the whole range of learning phenomena in human beings and animals,
2. Dealing with complexities of human symbolic learning and problem solving insights,
3. Taking into account the



# ON RETIREMENT

— G. Somaseshu

For more than three decades you served  
You put your heart and soul in work untired  
On righteous path you trod;

you never swerved;  
Gladly you ran your race - how soon retired!

Your acts of prudence, help and advice  
Succoured a lot and made them wise  
As long as this institution stays  
It speaks of your noble acts always.

A noble example in you we find  
For honest, noble acts so kind  
To cherish and follow - a light to our mind  
Unshaken by worldly snares which bind.

In all fields of knowledge you tried  
Your skill and talent : you have infused

Interest in others and made them abide  
By rules, utilising their skills un-used.

Un touched by pride of status and skill  
With brotherly touch and industry  
You gladdened others to work with thrill  
Cultivating team-work and amity.

Sloth and dishonesty you forbade  
Timely action you took with  
merciful thoughts

By generous and helpful acts you made  
Your noble image within our hearis.

Your noble mien and benign eyes  
Disarmed the students' furious cries  
Your sage and experienced advice  
Did cool their hearts and made them wise.

(Dedicated to our ideal Principal)



(Continued from previous page)

- development,
4. Effectively dealing with the topics of motivation and reinforcement, and
  5. Emphasising acquisition of skills and also learning of motives and emotions from the developmental point of view.

It appears to me that if we can develop a theory of learning by name *aptavakyam* theory of learning it may add something more to the already existing learning procedures. I have been also experimenting with *aptavakyam* learning in my psycho-pedagogic laboratory. Most

likely, by the time this essay reaches the readers, my second one on this issue reporting experimental evidence will be taking its shape.

In this context, I appeal to the readers to provide me a feed-back. Can *aptavakyam* learning which has been in practice in the east for centuries really be translated into the western psychological frame work? What I intend in this volume is only of a speculative and reflective thinking. Can we develop it into a full-fledged learning theory and is it necessary?





# THINGS FALL APART IN AN ALIENATED HISTORY : AN ASSESSMENT OF ACHEBE'S FICTIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Dr. K. Damodar Rao &  
K. Indrasena Reddy

While Achebe's first four novels appeared in a fairly quick pace of less than a decade between 1958 and 1966, his latest novel, *Ant hills of the Savannah*<sup>1</sup> took more than two decades to see the light of the day finally in 1987. *Things Fall Apart*<sup>2</sup> portrays authentically the fabric of African life as lived by the Ibos of the Eastern Nigeria at the fag end of 19th century before the advent of colonialism. *Ant hills of the Savannah* takes for its fictional locale, Kangan, a backward West African State and mirrors the political scenario of the present times (last leg of 20th Century). The other three novels -- *Arrow of God*<sup>3</sup> (1964), *No Longer At Ease*<sup>4</sup> (1960) and *A man of the people*<sup>5</sup> (1966) deal with the crucial and uneasy intermediate stages in African history. These novels unfold the events of colonial, pre-independent and early neo-colonial phases. Thus, Achebe surveys and examines the history of Africa of the past one hundred years critically and objectively through his fiction. In the process of delienation of such a vast historical background, Achebe dons the roles of an anthropologist, historian, teacher, critic, "sociologist of literature," humanist, visionary and above all the conscience-keeper of his people.

The early colonial administration of *Things Fall Apart* attempted to bring about "The pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger,"<sup>6</sup> through the

spiritual police and brute force and by resorting to intimidation and liquidation of the hostile elements. The indigenous rule in the neo-colonial times by the native black bosses - either in civilian robes or military garbs -- seeks to silence and stifle every conceivable form of dissent and protest by means of "domestication,"<sup>7</sup> and ruthless extermination so as to make the people docile and pliable. The *modus operandi* and the net result of both "pacification" and "domestication" are not very dissimilar. The situation, thus, has taken a full circle with a sort of *cul-de-sac* either way. Achebe is fully alive to this sordid scenario of Africa since the rise of colonialism. The issues with which he is concerned in his fiction are: Has the history of Africa an ill-chartered and disastrous course? How is it that it has an "embitterd and alienated history"<sup>8</sup> This paper addresses itself to these issues and seeks to evaluate and examine the diverse fictional perspectives and strategies of Achebe.

*Things Fall Apart*, according to Achebe himself, has two principal motifs to rectify the savage image of the African as propagated by the racist writers like Joseph Conrad, Joyce Cary and others, and to recreate the African history in terms of its myths, rituals, traditions, folk-lore, legends, etc., Yet another important motif of the novel is the use of "the written word brought by the colonizers in order to record and recreate



the oral word obliterated or denied by them."<sup>9</sup> It is a society known for its communal harmony, work-ethic and egalitarian values. However, it is not free from certain superstitious beliefs; for instance, the abandoning of the twins in the *Evil Forest*, the 'Osu' system based on social inequalities and human sacrifice to appease the local deities.

Okonkwo, the archaic protagonist of the novel, is patriotic, hard-working, action-oriented, and strong-willed. But he is also obstinate, inflexible and fails to read the writings on the wall. He often wonders why his people "lost the power to fight."<sup>10</sup> Obierika, his friend, tries to explain to him how the white man has divided the rank and file of the natives. He says:

*The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart.*<sup>11</sup>

Okonkwo seems to have understood the sad logic of this. But he cannot bring himself to accept the unacceptable proposition. Instead, he chooses to fight "alone" for what he believes in. Very soon he realizes that his action in killing the white man's messenger cannot be endorsed by his clansmen, let alone any follow-up action on their part. Rather than allow himself to be handed over to the alien administration for execution, he chooses the inevitable course of suicide. Thus, the old order and decadent values represented by him suffer a serious setback and face disintegration.

It is not without significance that Achebe chooses "**Things Fall Apart**" for the title of his first novel. Yeats's poem, "*The Second Coming*," from which the title is taken appeared in 1919, two years after the October Revolution in Soviet Russia marking the transition from the Christian era to the establishment of Communism as a form of government in Europe. On the same lines, the message of the novel is that "the centre fails to hold" and "the falcon cannot hear the falconer." The result: things drift and fall apart. Thus, the old order represented by Okonkwo disintegrates paving the way for colonialism in Africa.

**Arrow of God** Ezeulu of the later times (1920s) is the immediate fictional heir to Okonkwo. As the Chief Priest of the village deity, Ulu, he also acts as the friend, philosopher, guide and guardian of his community. He is in a position to read the meaning of the writings on the wall of the changed times. Unlike most of his clansmen, he knows that the white man has come, not as a visitor but with the intention to stay and select among them. Keeping this in view, he sends one of his sons to the white man's school wanting the latter to be his "third eye" to see beyond what others cannot hope to. He is also forthright and courageous enough to depose before the white man against the misplaced collective decision of the community in respect of a land dispute. Little does he realize, unfortunately, that by such actions he might alienate himself from the community besides walking into the trap of his rival, Nwaka and his henchmen.



While Okonkwo is emotional and a "man of action,"<sup>12</sup> Ezeulu is cool, composed and contemplative. He is a man of thought and often plays his cards very close to his chest. He keeps his friends and foes guessing about his moves. He remains a mystery even to his most intimate friend, Akuebe. His sense of concern and commitment to his people coupled with his open defiance against the colonial administration land him in trouble. Like his predecessor, Okonkwo, he also gets imprisoned and humiliated. Probably, he expected his clansmen to rise in rebellion against colonial administration for his incarceration. When this does not happen, he nurses a grievance against his community and chooses to strike at it at a time of his choice as the "arrow of god". In the fashion of Okonkwo again, he fails to take the community with him. What he does not realize, despite his vision and foresight, is that "no man however great can win judgment against a clan"<sup>13</sup>. Achebe seems to emphasise that against the African background, it is the community which takes precedence over the individual unlike in Europe.

Ezeulu misses two new moons due to his incarceration at Okperi, the Government headquarters. Back home following his release from prison, he is greeted with a scornful smile by more than one yam meant for his ritual consumption. Neither can he eat all the yams at once nor can he declare the New Yam Festival enabling the clansmen to undertake the operations of harvest. Consequently, people find themselves locked up in the old year

itself, and begin to face untold sufferings. The alien religion steps in at this stage, and "offers absolution from the wrath of Ulu to those who bring thank offerings to Christ..."<sup>14</sup> The expendable deity Ulu is overthrown and abandoned. But, mercifully, the Chief Priest is spared "the knowledge of the final outcome"<sup>15</sup> in his "demented" state. As an "arrow of his god," he chooses to strike at his own community for its lapses, indifference and complacency in the context of the fast spreading colonial virus. The community takes the whippings of its custodian deity, but chooses to seek shelter at the shrine of the alien God for its own reasons.

Thus, the fates of the emotional, archaic and obstinate Okonkwo and the shrewd, composed and thoughtful Ezeulu are not dissimilar. This precisely is the cursed course of the history of Africa.

**No Longer At Ease** While **Things Fall Apart** is an insider's account of Africa before the advent of colonialism, **Arrow of God** examines the issues arising out of cultural confrontation in the context of colonialism. **No Longer At Ease** explains the uneasy phenomenon experienced by the Magi in the Eliot's poem "Journey of the Magi" from which the title of the novel is extracted. The novel depicts the Nigerian scenario of the 50s, "... a world which is the result of the intermingling of Europe and Africa. ...."<sup>16</sup>.

Obi Okonkwo, the protagonist, is the fictional grandson of Okonkwo. He is a product of biculturalism. He is



"no longer at ease" either with the indigenous decadent system of 'Osu', the arranged marriages and the like nor is he any comfortable in his position as the top civil bureaucrat being unable to maintain the high standards of living expected of him. His zeal to reform his society of "Augean stable," his intention to marry Clara, an Osu girl, in the teeth of opposition from his community and home, his mother in particular, the growing financial burdens and pressures begin to tell upon his sensibility. The sensitive and oscillating Obi is puzzled and dazed under the cumulative pressure of all this. Life, under these circumstances, Obi imagines, is like a "bowl of wornwood which one sips a little at a time world without end."<sup>17</sup> and likens it to a "tragedy" and observes:

... "Real tragedy is never resolved. It goes on hopelessly for ever. conventional tragedy is too easy. The hero dies and we feel a purging of the emotions. A real tragedy takes place in a corner, in an untidy spot."<sup>18</sup> Obi does not know how he can go about to translate his ideas into actions, particularly in respect of his proposed marriage. He is very indecisive and vacillating. Clara feels humiliated after the termination of her pregnancy at his instance and severs her connections with him for good. It is followed by the rather unexpected death of his mother to whom he is sentimentally and emotionally attached. He is unnerved and shattered by these two incidents. He becomes insensible to what he does later on. He accepts a small bribe and faces a trial for the same. The colonial judge "cannot

comprehend how a young man of his education, brilliance and promise could have done this."<sup>19</sup> However, Mr. Green, the colonial administrator attributes this to the very nature of the African and comments: "The African is corrupt through and through."<sup>20</sup> The sad tale of Obi is due to his cultural alienation.

**A Man of the people** is a satire on the deplorable political scene immediately after the Nigerian independence in 1960. Within no time, the country becomes "a cesspool of corruption." **Chief Nanga**, the protagonist of the novel, is "a corrupt, uncultured minister of culture in a corrupt regime."<sup>21</sup>

The characters taken to task and held to ridicule in this novel are not Smiths, Clerks, Winterbottoms or Greens of the earlier novels, but the native black bosses themselves. The Minister's residence is a "princely seven bathroom mansion with its seven gleaming, silent action water closets in a country where the majority of the peasants and workers live in shacks and can afford only pails of excrement..."<sup>22</sup>. Thus, Achebe's fictional cavalcade has traversed a long way - from "goat-skin bags," "drinking horns," make-shift huts-dwellings of **Things Fall Apart** to princely mansions, water closets and luxury buses.

In such a situation, people very soon realize that the practising politicians have taken a greater share of the "national cake" than they need and deserve and that they have started reaping where they have not sown. But



they remain silent spectators to the nauseating political drama. Sensing the mood of the people, elections are sought to be rigged by thugs and hirelings of the vested interests to suit the multi-nationals and European commercial interests. Unprecedented and large-scale violence unleashed on the country before and immediately after the election, results in the abrupt termination of the civilian rule in an armed *coup d'etat*. Most critics and reviewers of **A Man of the People** hailed the novel as a "prophetic" work since it appeared just "nine days after the first military coup in Nigeria."<sup>23</sup> Bernth Lindfors' interpretation of this coup in terms of "an African parable" rather than as a "Nigerian Prophecy" has a greater relevance and validity in the larger context of the neo-colonial African scenario.

While the first three novels of Achebe deal with the rise and fall of the patriotic, the towering, and the idealist protagonists, **A Man of the people** is an indictment of the degenerate political leadership, complicity of the masses and a debased value system eating into the vitals of the body politic.

**Anthills of the Savanna** While **A Man of the people** is an indictment of the nauseating civilian rule, **Anthills of the Savannah** is a sad commentary on the grotesque and the gory power game of the military juntas. Obviously, there is not much to choose between the two. The novel marks a radical departure from his earlier ones in terms of historical background, cultural context, thematic framework, stylistic

devices, innovative narratology and multiple-protagonism. The story of Kangan, a backward West-African State, the fictional locale of the novel, is the story of three, intimate but "conceited" friends-- Sam (His Excellency), Christopher Oriko (the Minister for Information) and Ikem Osidi (the editor of the National Gazette). They are intellectual and highly educated. Beatrice, a spinster, is a highly-placed Bureaucrat and holds an Honours Degree in English Literature from the London University. She is dynamic, full of vigour and vitality. She is shrewd, sensitive and sentimental and influences the lives of Sam, Chris and Ikem immensely. Even His Excellency looks upon her as "the last hope of the country."<sup>24</sup>

As the novel progresses and concludes, all the three friends fall like "three green bottles." Sam, His Excellency is kidnapped, killed and the dead body abandoned in the bush without the state or even a private funeral. Ikem's murder is engineered and executed by the State. Chris gets killed under totally unanticipated circumstances while rescuing a young girl from being raped by a cop in uniform. This, then is the sad tale of the disastrous, cursed, "embittered and alienated history" of Africa.

All the novels of Achebe, thus delineate authentically the sordid predicament of Africa since the early colonial times to the post-independence era. But, in the first three novels, both the black and white *dramatis personae* act sometimes independently, and at



times interact with each other producing interesting and varying effects in terms of race relations, cultural diversities and class prejudices. These novels, in a way, project perspective which seeks to blame the missionaries, the colonial and power apparatus for all the problems and miseries heaped on Africa. In this process, the local characters emerge as innocent, and helpless creatures winning our sympathy.

The post-colonial novels -- **A Man of the people** and **Anthills of the Savannah** present a totally different perspective as the *dramatis personae* here are mostly black bosses. In these novels, Achebe directs his ire and fire against both the civilian regimes and army juntas. There is hardly anything to choose between the two as both represent evil in varying degrees. The callous and anti-people attitude of the rulers reinforce the idea that Africa has a cursed, "alienated and embittered" history. These rulers are like protruding pinples on a beautiful face comparable to ugly anthills on the marvellous stretches of savannah.

### NOTES

1. Achebe, Chinua. **Ant Hills of the Savannah** (London : Woniain Heinemann 1987)
2. **Things Fall apart**. (London : William Heinemann Ltd., 1953 rpt., New Dehi: Allied publishers, 1988) All further page references are to the latter edition.
3. **Arrow of God**. (London : William Heinemann Ltd., 1964; revised and reprinted in African Writers Series, 1980).
4. **No Longer At Ease** (London : William Heinemann Ltd., 1960; African Writers Series edition,, 1978).
5. **A Man of the people**. (London :William Heinemann Ltd., 1966; rpt. African Writers Series edition, 1981).
6. **Things Fall Apart**, P.197.
7. **Anthills of the Savannah**, P.40.
8. **Ibid.**, P.220
9. Innes, C. L. "Language, Poetry and Doctrine in **Things Fall Apart**", **Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe** (eds.) C. L. Innes & Bernth Lindfors, (Washington D. C.: Three Continents Press, 1978) P.124.
10. Achebe, Chinua. **Things Fall Apart**, P.159.
11. **Ibid.**, P. 160.
12. **Ibid.**, P. 62
13. Achebe, Chinua. **Arrow Of God**, P. 131
14. Robert M. Wren, "Mister Johnson and the complexity of **Arrow of God**", **Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe** (eds.) C. L. Inners & Bernth Lindfers, **op.cit.**, P.213
15. Achebe, Chinua, **Arrow of God**, P. 229.
16. Carroll, David. **Chinua Achebe**. (London : The Macmillan press Ltd., 1980), P.62.
17. Achebe, Chinua, **No Longer At Ease**, P.36.
18. **Ibid.**, P.36.
19. **Ibid.**, P.2.
20. **Ibid.**, P. 3.
21. Ngugi Wa Thiong to "Chinua Achebe: **A Man of the people**" **Critical perspectives on Chinua Achebe**, **Op.cit.**, P.2280.
22. **Ibid.**
23. Lindfors, Bernth. "Achebe's African Parable", **Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe**, **op. Cit.**, P. 248.
24. Achebe, Chinua. **Anthills of the Savannah**, P.73





## PROSE POEM

## DEATH, I GREET THEE

R. Suryanarayana Murty

- 1 -

Death I greet thee and await thee  
at my door step

Thy twisted mouth and sunken  
eyes strike no terror in me ;

Thou striketh the young and old  
alike, thou the great leveller,

The young bride, still in the nuptial  
dress,

Shy and bashful, with cheeks rosy,  
Falls a prey to thee, burnt alive,  
with oil poured all over,

The in-laws making a bonfire,  
scotching a life in its prime,

A crime abetted for no fault, but  
for not getting more dowry;

The young child, still in the womb,  
stilled at thy command,

Even before it can raise a silent  
cry

Its Primordial right to take shape  
in a safe haven

Commanding no respect even from  
the parents ;

Thou could rouse the basest  
passions in the bakery of human  
brain

To wield the rod of power, to lord  
over others,

While millions are moulded as  
machines of destruction

The world kept in a trauma of  
perpetual fear

With wars fought using deadly  
weapons, forged in thy arsenal,

Every war sowing seeds for a fresh  
war

Every time more and more killer  
weapons being forged

How long is the world to suffer the  
agony of war ?

Why hoodwink nations with  
occasional bouts of peace

While terror and ethnic violence  
are given free reign

Leaving more people dead than  
during a war.

- 2 -

Death! I greet thee and await thee  
at my door step

A life's full cycle spent, living on  
borrowed time,

But pray don't make me victim of  
thy diabolical powers

Thy visit should mark the  
culmination of a fruitful life,

Nursed on great thoughts, high  
principles, and noble endeavour

To make many flowers bloom  
entrusted to my care

The harvest rich, the garden a  
living paradise,

While new blossoms nursed in the  
garden take up the mantle

To carry the torch further to scale  
olympian heights,

While I depart, the race survives,  
Sustained by the rich legacy

bequeathed by noble spirits,  
Hardened on the rock of duty and

service

To face the many buffets of life

But always to uphold rights held  
sacrosanct for one and all. ❄



## A Short story

## THE PARTITION

Subra Bharati Manian

I felt that this could have been done at some other time. But all of them said in one voice, "Why leave this alone? We can divide the properties inclusive of vessels now itself."

Everything was done in a tearing hurry. As though all this should be finished before celebrating the sixteenth day after Amma's death. There was the haste that everyone had a lot of his own business to attend to. Appa had executed his will settling each of the five houses to his five sons. He withdrew his savings from the bank and divided it among his sons. Till a few days ago he was vaunting that he would not give even a paisa to anyone, that they could take the money after his death. So it was a surprise to all, that such a man had voluntarily drawn the cash from the bank and given it to his sons.

It appeared that he had become wilted and wearied. Suddenly he pocketed his pride and became completely tired like the cock that got defeated in the fight. For two years Amma was in bed answering calls of nature in her bed itself. And even then sitting by her side Appa looked after her always with tenderness. Amma's groaning and babbling were ever there like the feeble cry of a wounded bird.

"Ayyo, you attend to all this... why... Instead of my looking after you..."

Tears would stream from Amma's eyes and reveal the wrinkles in her face. On it a fear, foreboding something.

"Your end will come before mine..." Appa was very much run down. His was a body that was built eating the flesh of the

cock that got defeated in the cock-fight. His well-built body had become emaciated. The majestic moustache that once had its tips curled up now drooped down. Till Amma became bedridden it had an imperial look.

Amma died early morning on a Vaikunta Ekadasi day. Garlands were placed round her neck. She was regarded as a deity. A *kuthuvilakku* was lit and kept in front of her. Then leaning against a pillar Appa cried aloud. It made people think about the glorious time he had lived with her and wonder at it. "Whatever be the disease of which she died, even if her end was anticipated, the fact she was a mother was there." This left in us a feeling of emptiness. Everyone repeated this to me. But as usual all the people stood a little away from Appa out of fear. It seemed that his great grief was that he had no member of his family who could touch him, console him.

It was decided that the torn saris of Amma should be given to the housemaid who used to wash them. The good saris were taken by my sisters-in-law. I had my own doubt whether they would ever wear those saris. My wife said, "It would be better if they too were given to the house-maid." But my sister-in-law did not agree to this idea. They said, "What if they are the saris of Athai who is no more... we can use them. Where can one get such dark-coloured, artificial-yarn-dyed Negamam silk saris? On days of religious fasting if we tell her that we would get her a sari, Athai would reply, 'No need, no need for it... you buy, wear them and prosper. That is enough for me.' She would raise her withered arms, join them in



supplication and bless us. We can wear Athai's saris and receive her blessings..." I was very much pleased to hear them say so.

It was the senior paternal uncle of Ellappalayam who settled the dispute and helped the smooth passing of these fifteen days. Otherwise when did I sit along with my five elder brothers like this. I always see myself in a corner or in the midst of the gathering of my sister-in-law and children. Many years had gone by since then. Without a voice of protest from him who had the cheek to face Appa, Appa who was short tempered and rough and tough. His anger and rudeness had cut into pieces the tree that was a joint-family. How well would it have been if only this opportunity had come when Amma was still alive.

Amma's condition had become worse. When I reached the village after a day's journey the entire family was there. "Amma, please see, we are all here." I did not know how far my wailing would have reached my Amma's ears. No one was certain that she had completely lost her consciousness. The last thing she did was to recognise me and ask me feebly "You have come?" When I was here last, she removed the chain round her neck, gave it to Appa and said, "It has lost some weight due to wear and tear. Add some more money and buy a chain for four sovereigns."

"Amma, why do you want it now? We can look into it later."

"It is not like that ... Should be done here and now. It should not be said that I did not give anything to my youngest daughter-in-law... If I do not do it now, after my lifetime it should not be claimed by one or the other. That's the reason. Do you see my point?"

My senior paternal uncle guffawed and said, "Why such a hurry over the division of the vessels. You could have got whatever you needed when the old woman was alive. Her two daughters were not able to come for the funeral. Had they come they would have taken the vessels claiming that they were their Amma's. And you would be sighing, panting ..."

"Mama ... they didn't come... then the vessels belong to us."

My two elder sisters did not come to condole Amma's death. There was a reason for it. When Appa sold the house that was in Amma's name he divided equally the sale proceeds of the house among all the children. But the two elder sisters insisted, "The house was in our Amma's name. You should give the whole amount equally to the two of us." When they could not get what they wanted, they kept away from the family. Even though Amma was in bed for nearly two years my sisters did not come even to see her. Stubbornness increased and made the disagreement between them and their parents wider and permanent.

The vessels used by Amma were cleaned with tamarind pulp and arranged in the central hall. Among them there were very few stainless steel vessels. Most of Amma's vessels were made of bronze or brass. Somehow Amma did not like stainless steel vessels. Perhaps their glitter did not attract her. Amma used to keep the vessels regularly cleaned with oven-ash and tamarind pulp. The bronze vessels would sparkle. They would be heavy too. Still Amma carried only those vessels to bring water.

"Amma, we want that cauldron. See, how big it is. It will contain at least ten pots of water," said Selvi to my elder sister-in-



## THE PARTITION

37

law. "Who would clean the bronze pots and keep them brand new. The waist that carried plastic pots would get bruised if it carries bronze pots." The second sister-in-law left the place silently. But the eyes of the elder sister-in-law were fixed on the bronze pots. When she placed her hand on it suddenly, the large-sized salver nearby moved a bit making a tinkling sound.

"Our Athai would take coconuts, fruit and other things intended for any function in the temple only in this salver. If a piece of cloth is screwed into a ball and balanced on her head and the salver placed on it, it won't move however strong the wind might be. She would move like a temple car and the salver would gleam in the sunlight. At the time of the bhajan on Saturdays she would have the '*chundal*' heaped in this salver and give handfuls of it to the people gathered there. And they would say what a large hearted lady she was ..." So saying the elder sister-in-law wiped off her tears.

Srimukhi (my daughter) took the tumbler with a nozzle and said, "This is for me, for me alone. Amma, hereafter I will drink milk only from this." She placed the nozzle in her mouth and began to suck it.

"Your Appa would always be at his Amma's breast or with the nozzle of this tumbler in his mouth when he was a child. Everyone would make fun of him - 'you fellow with nozzle-tumbler'," Said my middle elder brother. I felt ashamed. My sisters-in-law laughed. Their laughter caught hold of everyone present there. Soon the atmosphere became merry.

How social and intimate was the nozzle-tumbler. However much I tried I couldn't recollect when exactly I discarded it. It seemed to me that it was still there just to remind me of my Amma. "Even if I were

not given any vessel I should be given the wooden stand on which pots and vessels were usually kept."

Along stand beautifully made. Since I was living in a town I had completely forgotten the name of the wood out of which it was made. But it still stands majestic in spite of its having served all these years. Small flowers have been carved in its corners. Its legs appeared firm and strong. If a long plank had been placed over it, it would serve as a raised seat.

"When the daughters born of her had not come, you, a daughter at the next move want it. Take it." Senior paternal uncle's daughter was stroking the stand. "Someone will say 'I want this'. And another 'I want that'. Some problem or other will crop up. Can divide whatever there is into five parts. You can then draw lots and each can have one's share."

Each of the five parties could get a bronze pot. The two plates and the brass '*andas*' were divided among them. It was easy to share the stainless steel vessels. The tinkling sound of the vessels in movement was heard continuously. It looked as if a small shop of vessels stood there.

Rangaraj placed his leg on the top of the door, rubbed the dust off his pants and jumped down. He had a conch-shell in his hand. Hurriedly he dusted it on his shirt and tried to blow it. The mouth swelled, contracted. No sound came out of the conch-shell. I tried to blow it. But I got a catch somewhere. And there came no sound out of it.

When I was young, in the month of Purattasi, with what ease I had blown this conch. at the time the flambeau was taken out. A raging sound would come out of it, float on the wind. Today I was not able to



raise the sound even for a minute. I tried to blow, but failed. Children too tried, but did not succeed. There were hard impressions at the places where the fingers had held the conch. If there was burning sensation or pain in the eyes Amma would rub the conch-shell on a stone, apply the paste over the eyelids and relieve the pain. She had to rub it for a long time. The paste could be drawn like a string. It would appear that the nerves in her hands were about to break, when Amma with her weak hands rubbed the conch-shell hard on the stone.

"Then where is Appa's box in which he used to keep the pipe clay, the red paint, the rosary of sacred basil beads?"

"It is with me. I took it sometime ago," the second elder brother said. The box was made of very fine teak wood. Small apartments to keep separately kumkum, pipe clay etc. What an exhilarating pleasure did the white and red lines marked on the forehead had given me ... Now I have the knowledge and the courage to reject them. It seemed as if I had lost that innocence and joy.

Rangaraj brought the dirt-laden *thambalam*-basket. (a large salver with raised rim). "It was in the loft ... A very big one." Two children could be made to lie on it. It had lost the colour, of the bamboo and appeared as a new, fresh thing. People in the neighbourhood would borrow it in advance at times of marriage. Then there would be a great demand for it in the season. When the betel leaves were arranged and the arecanuts heaped in a corner the basket would get a special charm of its own. To those who got the blessings of the elders would be given betel leaves and arecanuts.

Nowadays stainless steel plates are in vogue. And only slivers of arecanuts are

supplied in small packets. Betel leaves also are only folded and offered. I do not remember having seen this '*thambalam*' even at the time of my marriage.

"I am taking it."

"Why, Bava (brother-in-law)?"

"Let it be with me. A heirloom. A memento of the elders in my house."

"At the time of Vimala's marriage betel and nuts would be offered only in this '*thambalam*' basket. Would not it be so?"

Vimala felt shy and stood aloof in a corner.

Names were written in five bits of paper. And lots were drawn.

Now the conch-shell came to Appa's hands. Rangaraj said, "Thatha, blow it." As if he felt shy he went on wiping the conch with his towel. Then he placed it between his lips.

As Appa blew it, the sound went on increasing. All those present were astonished to see this. They wanted to know where from this sound came. The sound grew in volume. People remained silent and watched the scene. The face with a drooping moustache and deep lines of worry swelled and contracted. It was obvious that he was blowing the conch with difficulty. Suddenly the sound stopped. Appa began to cough. And he started to wipe the tears at the corners of his eyes.

"The blowing of this conch-shell holding his breath is very much like his obstinacy. There were competitions between me and him- my younger brother - as to who would blow the conch for a longer time. It was he who had won on all those occasions," said our senior paternal uncle.

"Thatha, the cane is in the loft. Shall I take it?" Appa looked stunned. His face grew dark.



## THE PARTITION

39

From the place I sat I looked at that cane. It was stuck in the roof-top. It looked as if someone had placed it climbing a ladder so that no one could take it.

My entire body shuddered for a minute when I thought of that cane. How many times had Appa beaten me with it. If a word had come out of one's mouth against Appa or anyone had spoken contradicting him, the thing that would speak was that cane. All his anger would get drained after using it.

When Appa walked with the flambeau the conch-shell would hang from one side of his shoulder. He would have the cane too at that side of his waist. He would crush the burning cloth in the flambeau and apply a 'tilak' on one's forehead. The black 'namam' would be marked there. People would wait for Appa's blessings. In the month of *purattasi* when Appa starts with the flambeau in his hand a crowd would follow him. The anklet-bells would jingle. People would bow to his feet and join their palms in respectful greeting. All of them would get the black 'tilak' of the flambeau. Sometimes he would get possessed. On such occasions Appa's cane would test the courage of the person's skin. People who got the beating would scream. "You would say, 'Hereafter I would be very careful. I won't commit any misdeed.' I would be surprised to know how this deity was able to find out the misdeeds. Appa would stroke the body of a person from head to foot and strike the cane on the ground. Then that person's face would become bright as if all his sufferings had vanished and the evil spirit had been exorcised.

I remembered the occasions I had been beaten with that cane. Appa did not have any schooling or the interest to show concern for my education. But he wanted

that all of us should be under his control all the time. His thick curled, moustache and the strong, noisy chappal would make anyone afraid of him. Once he saw me moving with a boy of a particular caste. He mentioned that boy's caste and asked me whether I was not ashamed of that. I told him, "Our chief Minister himself is of that caste ... Remove him." Then I got a severe thrashing. My whole body became blood stained.

Even my elder brothers were afraid at the very mention of that cane. They would have become scared of it as they did of his curled moustache and the noise of his chappals. But I had within me a wonderful feeling as to how in the month of *purattasi* he and this cane got this quality of divinity.

"Quite a number of blows had I received at your Appa's hands... He would go away saying that there was a cock-fight. How much would I have suffered to make your elder brothers grow up as men of substance. And this cane which makes him divine in a sense - how many curses would it have received from me? I had to curse him - 'Are you a man or a demon?' In spite of all this you have grown up well and made me feel happy".

Appa sat intensely gathered into the thought of the cane, fixing his eyes on the roof-tiles. It looked as though his grief had increased manifold.

"Thatha, shall I take that cane ... To whom should it be given? I myself shall keep it." Thatha rose panic-stricken.

"No ... No... Leave it there itself. Nobody need have it"

He began to walk swiftly to the door. The people who took the vessels they got in the lot knocked and rubbed on them and tested their quality. The conch-shell changed hands among the children. But from no one came its musical sound.

(Translated from Tamil by : M.S. Ramaswamy, Coimbatore)





# TRANSLATION FROM SRI MATH ANDHRA MAHA BHAGAVATHAM

B. Indira Kumari

1

At whose will exists the whole Universe  
In whom so blissfully it ever glories  
And into whom it again fully dissolves  
Who is the cause of the World's origin itself  
Who neither beginning nor ending possesses  
Who in truth is all in all and He Himself all ever  
HIM, Him alone I do always adore.

2

Who once manifests himself in the form of Universe  
And takes in all again into His own self  
Who is both manifestation and dissolution  
Who of His own creation the happy witness  
Who, in all purity always does shine  
And who no doubt is the Atman itself  
HIM, Him alone my heart longs for.

3

At the moment, when the Universe, its preservers  
And all those there in being in existence  
Dissolve, who alone beyond the thick dark of nothingness  
Glows in all His everlasting effulgence  
HIM, Him alone I do pray at all times.





# SRI RAMANUJA AND DIVYA PRABANDHAM

Dr. M. Varadarajan.

Among the religions in India, Sri Vaishnavism, as enlightened in Tamil, through *Alwars*, hymns, occupies a prominent place. The twelve *alwars*, who flourished in South India, mostly between the 6th and 8th centuries, have sung soul stirring hymns, called Divya Prabandham, a divine poetical composition. *Alwars*, who immersed in the nature of the Divine, His beauties, His attributes and deeds are called Divya Suris. In the divine poetical composition, they praised the Lord who is dwelling in a place or town which is called Divya Desa. So, Divya Suris, Divya Prabandham and Divya Desas are together akin to divinity.

Sriman Nathamuni, the first pontiff of Sri Vaishnavism, rediscovered, collected and collected *Alwars* 'hymns in the middle of 9th Century and arranged to recite the hymns in Deva Ganga in temples.

Since the advent of Sri Ramanuja in the 11th century, several acharyas contributed to the advancement of the concept of *Ubhaya* which means equal validity of both the Sanskrit *srutis* and Tamil *Prabandhams* of *Alwars*.

Alagiya Manavala Perumal Nayanar in his text **Acharya Hridayam** emphatically stated that like *Sruti* which was given by the Lord to Brahma, Divya Prabandhams were also given by the Lord to the *Alwars*. In another *Sutra*, he says that Ramanuja used to explain *Brahma Sutras* with the aid of *Tiruvoymozhi* of Nammalvar.

Until Ramanuja's period, there were candid conversations, discussions and dialogues on the hymns of *Alwars* by Acharyas like Nathamuni, Yamunacharya, Tirumalai Nambi and Tirumalai Andan.

In compliance with Ramanuja's instructions, his disciple Tirukkurakai - piran Pillan, wrote the first commentary for *Tiruvoymozhi*, called *Arayirappadi*. Following this, four commentaries have come out in different times by four other *acharyas*. Among these, we could find a record of conversations, dialogues and discussions of several *acharyas* on *alwars* 'hymns in the commentaries of Krishnapada's 24 *paadi* and Nampillai's *idu*. It is to be noted that Krishnapada, otherwise called Periyavachchan Pillai, wrote commentaries for 4000 hymns of *alwars* and acquired the title Vyakhyana Chakravarthi.

As a thought reader and a saint philosopher, Ramanuja intuited the inner thoughts of *alwars* and gave critical expositions of *alwars* 'experience. Although Ramanuja has not written any Tamil work, his most authoritative and systematic expositions on *alwars* 'hymns were recorded in the commentaries.

I wish to present some of the incidents and interpretations of *alwars* hymns as unearthed by Ramanuja. From his critical expositions, we can derive and enjoy his cardinal devotion in the following way :

1. Ramanuja's obeisance to *Alwars*
2. Ramanuja's revelation on *alwars* ' inner thought
3. Ramanuja's intoxicated love in *Tiruppavai*
4. Ramanuja's as a foster mother of *Tiruvoymozhi*.

## 1. Ramanuja's Obeisance to *Alwars*:

With a view to showing their gratitude, several acharyas including Ramanuja paid reverence to *alwars* and their hymns through invocatory verses.



Paying a glorious tribute to Nammalvar in his invocatory hymn to Periya Tiruvandhadhi, Ramanuja asks his mind to endeavour, abide, utter, salute and mouthfully praise the name of Nammalvar.

In another invocatory poem to Kulasekhara's Perumal *Tirumozhi*, Ramanuja invites a parrot for feeding nectar and asks it to tell the name of Kulasekhara, who sings about Srirangam, adored the name of Perumal, and a Head of our lineage

Ramanuja's devotion and love on Tirumangai Alwar and his Prabandham are par excellence. In his invocatory poem to Periya Tirumozhi, Ramanuja says thus.

*May Parakalan, who is a God of death for enemies, prosper!*

*May Kalikandri, who eradicates the sins that comes in Kaliyuga, prosper!*

*May the king who resides in Kuraiyalur, prosper!*

*May Tirumangai Alwar, who by his powerful sword*

*got Tirumantra Upadesa from Sriman Narayana*

*and who rules the subjects of Tirumangai and*

*Whose heart and conduct are alike pure, prosper!*

## 2. Ramanuja's revelation on Alwars inner thought :

There are several incidents recorded in the commentaries on Ramanuja's quintessence devotion of Alwars.

During Ramanuja's time, Areyars used to perform *abhinaya* for *alwars'* hymns in Srirangam. Even now service is being continued. One day, Areyar was elaborating a line of a hymn which speaks Periyalwar's experience on child Krishna in His *Tirumozhi*. For that line, Areyar identified himself by doubling the upper eyelid over

the eyeball inside out to frighten the go. Ramanuja's cousin, Govinda Bhattar, who was sitting behind him in the audience noticed Areyar's improper *abhinaya* and he at once suggested silently by raising his two hands above his shoulders simultaneously as Krishna is showing His four hands with conch and chakra to frighten the gopis. Having noticed, Areyar repeated his *abhinaya* for that line as narrated by Govinda Bhattar. Ramanuja, who was sitting in the front and minutely observing the *abhinaya* was amazed at this kind of action and turned back where Govinda bhattar was sitting. Then he commended him for his point of action.

This shows Ramanuja's deep observance of inner thought of *alwar* that was unearthed by Govinda Bhattar and practiced by Areyar.

Thus, Tiruvarangath thamudhanar, a contemporary of Ramanuja, in his **Ramanuja Noorthanthadhi**, beautifully describes Ramanuja whose mind never forgets to prostrate before the feet of Periyalwar who did *mangalasaana* to Lord for His safety.

## 3. Ramanuja's intoxicated love in Tiruppavai :

By his discerning faith in Andal and her *Tiruppavai*, Ramanuja is called *Tiruppavai Jeer*.

One day, in his round for alms, he was reciting a verse in Andal's *Tiruppavai* that speaks about the awakening of Nappinnai, Krishna's Consort. While doing so, he reached the doors of his preceptor Tirukkottiyur Nambi. Incidentally daughter Devaki Piratti came out to open the door. Having seen the girl who resembles Nappinnai with her tinkling bangles, Ramanuja prostrated before. She went



inside and told her father about it. Nambi thought that Ramanuja must have been reciting *Tiruppavai* hymn pertaining to Nappinnai and outpoured the experience by coincidence and he enquired Ramanuja about it. He agreed with him and fainted. This bears an eloquent testimony to his title *Tiruppavai Jeer* and his intoxicated love for *Tiruppavai*.

Thus, Amuthanar, narrates that Ramanuja was a great sage whose life is endured by the grand grace of Andal who first used the garland and later crowned the head of Lord Ranganatha.

#### 4. Ramanuja as foster mother of Tiruvoymozhi :

Ramanuja's contribution to *Tiruvoymozhi* is significant in all aspects. It is said that he learnt the first three thousand hymns of *alvars* at the feet of Periya Nambi and *Tiruvoymozhi* at the feet of Tiruvaranga Perumal Areyar. In compliance with the wishes of Yamunacharya, Ramanuja named his *jnana putra* Pillan after Nammalvar i.e. Tirukkurukaipiran Pila and instructed him to write a commentary for *Tiruvoymozhi*.

At one time, while discoursing Nammalvar's hymn '*Ozhivi Kalamettam*' he enquired which of the listeners in the group would like to go to Tirumala, a place which is all the time chilly combined with unbroken rains and render service to Lord as desired by Nammalvar. In response to that call, Acharya Ananthalthwar readily agreed to render service and sought Ramanuja's blessings. Then he embraced him for his courage and called him Anpillai (one and only male). This shows Ramanuja's abundant love and devotion for Nammalvar and strived hard to accomplish the wishes of Nammalvar.

Thus, Parasara Bhattar, son of

Kuraththalwan, in his invocatory poem to *Tiruvoymozhi*, remarked that while Nammalvar was the mother of 1000 hymns of *Tiruvoymozhi*, Tamil Veda which speaks of the glory of Lord Ranganatha, Ramanuja was the foster mother whose perseverance nurtured these hymns for our benefit. Amudhanar also underlined that by the instinct of Ramanuja, Nammalvar's *Tiruvoymozhi* has blossomed.

As has been stated earlier, Ramanuja gave thought provoking interpretations for Nammalvar's hymns particularly *Tiruvoymozhi* in more than 50 places. The following are two instances.

In the very first hymn of *Tiruvoymozhi*, Nammalvar instructs his mind to worship the Lord who has all auspicious qualities; head of both worlds; who gave to Nammalvar the wisdom and bhakti and whose feet dispel the distresses of the devotees.

In the tenth hymn of fourth centum in third decad, Nammalvar exalted the genuine nature of God. He states that god, by pervading the sentient being and non-sentient matter, will not be affected by its changing fortunes, welfare, grief etc. Even the individual soul by dwelling in a particular body will not be affected by its metamorphosis or decline in energy. Though the soul is not affected by its body's change of condition, it partakes the pain and pleasure that are experiencing through the body. In such a case, it is argued that the dweller, Lord inside all cannot also remain unaffected by such experiences of individual soul. The great commentator like Nampillai, explains that in a prison, a person is imprisoned for being guilty, whereas a jail visitor visits the prison for enquiry and other sort of work. He is not affected by visiting the jail. Prisoner



# HEAVENLY VISITORS

— Dr. R. Janardana Rao

They fly, heaven bent, carefree  
 Fresh beauty ever, no cosmetic concern  
 Houses built on own, for occasions only  
 Birds, coordinators of heaven and earth.  
 Man, alas, bound to earth, sans flights  
 Plods lugging loads of cares many  
 Of family, wealth, work and name !  
 Didn't the prophet enjoin us to see them  
 As examples for us to see and follow  
 Ridding our egoism and humbly taking  
 lessons  
 Seeing the birds, lives, and open page of  
 humility  
 Ah! What's world without birds !

Wonders they perpetrate, for us to ponder  
 Their ways of living, expanding and  
 protecting  
 Away from the clutches of cruel men  
 They never look at us with love  
 But askance, always about our ways !  
 Do we fit into them in any way ?  
 Men, they fear, doubt or shrug away,  
 Each man, a gamester fearful, they view  
 Ready to trap, capture and torture  
 Behind barred cages bereft of nature  
 That life they shudder, heaven's sake  
 Hop and chirp, always on move  
 Beyond the evil looks of man, his catch,  
 Their enemy, that swells in evil pleasure  
 Man leads a cage living  
 Strange, he wants the birds too withhim !



(continued from previous page)

is in prison because of his fault. Hence he is a sufferer. Jail visitor is in prison because of his liking. He is not affected. The individual soul is like a prisoner, body is like a prison-house whereas Lord is like a jail visitor who is not affected by being in prison. Further he explains that if one realises this philosophy, he can reach Him. Here, some *acharyas* say that God can be reached by those who practice Bhakti; some others say leaving other paths like Karma, Jnana and Bhakti-Yoga and taking God himself a path, one can reach Him. Further some interpret by *antima smriti*, one can reach Him. Having noticed all other *acharyas* versions, Ramanuja asserts that since Nammalvar has showed

*sarvathma bhava* to Lord in this particular hymn, it is to be stated that God will not be affected by the changes that took place for *chit* (sentient being) and *achit* (non-sentient matter) *tatvas*. When the individual soul dwells in a body, that soul will not be affected for the changes of fortunes, welfare etc. that took place for a body. Likewise God will not be affected by the change that affects body and its indwelling soul. He declared that one who gets such a revelation can attain Him.

In this way, there were several incidents and interpretations recorded in the commentaries.





## A Sketch

## GRANDMOTHER

— Dr. B. Parvati

My grandmother lived until her 66th year. She must have been fair complexioned once but in her later years she developed a skin disease called leukoderma. She became weak and dark, water accumulated in her stomach. She was in bed for three or four years while a faithful old servant Sitamma attended on her.

One or two years before her end came my grandmother developed a fancy for entertaining guests every day. She insisted on serving them with savouries and delicacies when they came to see her. It was alright in the beginning but we all soon got tired of such things. My elder sisters, my father, mother and a number of her relatives, the cook and servant often told her. "We'll take them inside and serve them properly. Not here. It is a sick room". My grandmother was a clever and intelligent woman. She soon found out that people at home were not being truthful. She resented our action or inaction in this matter. She was particularly angry because when she proclaimed a dark brahmin who came home every day was Vishnu none of us was inclined to believe so.

She always had some sweets and savouries in stainless steel boxes ready for us to eat after we came back from school. I cannot say I was her favourite grandchild because she doted a lot upon my eldest sister and the third one. How much she did is evident from the 40 sovereigns of gold, a house and fertile fields she gave to her eldest granddaughter, just a two stringed gold chain for the second one, equal amount of gold and bangles for the third one and of course a plate which weighs one kilogram today of

silver which she was so amused to give me. One day she called us all to her bedside and said "Tell me your wishes, I will give you whatever you ask". While my sisters thought of gold chain and bangles, the glittering big silver lotus leaf shaped plate attracted me greatly for then I was only a child of eight years or ten or even less. I was angry because every body laughed when I said so and I did not understand why they laughed.

Soon she became very ill and the end came on one afternoon. She was conscious and bold till the end they said. I took my name after my maternal grandmother while my sister took hers from my paternal grandmother. "You two have the names of a mother and mother-in-law. No wonder you fight," my mother often said. Was my grandmother not fond of me because of my name or was I too young while she was old and ill? I remember her sweet song from Adhyatma Ramayana which she used to sing before dawn in a soft voice, her sitting before the coal stove busy taking the decoction in a huge brass filter, boiling milk, making coffee, churning curds. She was not very generous in giving me as much butter as I wanted to go with my early morning meal which consisted of cold rice, mango pickle, ghee, butter milk and butter. I never liked coffee and I didn't relish milk either. I don't remember what she did after that but later in the day she prayed, went round the Tulasi then finally swinging her hands in salutation, she looked at the skies, sat down with her Tulasi beads for sometime, then ate food from her silver plate and washed it herself.

That she made my mother unhappy



# MEMENTOMORI

— A. R. Narayanan

While I was scooping up the wealth I secur'd  
Through every means open, evil and good,  
With haste, frenzy and all the anxiety,  
Though it was not life's absolute necessity,  
To taste the utmost of world's luxury  
And to build a fabulous treasury,  
Many a man on earth could not have dreamt  
Nor any one would ever make an attempt.  
Blood and flesh, nor kith and kin,

nothing stood

In my way to the riches, at jet speed  
None did dare to come near me, lest not stop.  
Did let me, take off, and always feel atop.  
Until one day I was posed a question  
By whom I thought a heap of superstition,  
A humpty dumpty guy, draped in saffron,  
Counting rosaries and caring for none :  
"Will all the estates you have bought over

Remain yours whence from earth  
you pass over?"

My speeding pursuit, caught under its spell  
Slowed, paused to ponder;  
at toll of the knell

Have to leave, losing all and my body  
Behind, while somebody to grab  
it gets ready

All I owned ceases to be mine on death;  
Because the dead can't own here  
an inch of earth.

Futile is one's efforts to earn more  
Than what is needed for this  
life's limited score

Henceforth my coffers were opened for  
charity

Covered by veil of anonymity.

Message of Bhagvat Gita having imbibed  
I did not like my name on plaque inscribed.

✱

*(continued from previous page)*

and was always a very dominating woman I know. The whole household including my father obeyed her implicitly. Only when I grew up I understood that my father was not strictly obedient. Later when I knew enough to understand the reason for my mother's plight, I was angry with my grandmother.

But was she that unkind? I think she was not. She got married to my grandfather who was a widower, when she was eleven. She bore my father when she was thirteen and by the time he was ten, he

had only his mother to look after him. In her long lonely life where did she find courage and strength? Was life cruel or kind to her? What was in her mind deep within, I cannot imagine or fathom for I feel a great tenderness for her in my heart whose plight was similar to that of thousands of women of her days. She was adamant and superstitious, but I remember she opposed shaving the head of a relative whose husband died. "Leave her, she is young," she said, a woman with some feeling for another woman.

✱



# PRAYER

Prof. S. Jagadisan

The word 'Prayer' corresponding to Sanskrit *Prarthana* is from a Latin root meaning a solemn and humble request to God or an object of worship; supplication, petition of thanksgiving.

Prayer is one factor common to all religions. Religious practices, rituals, forms of worship, doctrine, forms of deities and ideas about God may vary. Prayer as human communication with the divine goes beyond the diversity of religious beliefs. It is the soft, delicate, enduring silken thread which does not snap, binding man with God; it is the bridge between the devotee and the deity.

"Prayer is the yearning of the heart to be one with the Maker, an invocation for His blessing" (Gandhi). "Prayer is the very breath of religion; for it brings man and God together, and with every sigh, nearer and nearer" (Baba).

*More things are wrought by  
prayer than*

*This world dreams of;*

*So the whole round earth is every  
way*

*Bound by gold chains about the  
feet of God.*

( Tennyson )

"Different are the languages of prayer: but the tears are the same. We have a vision of Him in whose

compassion all men's Prayers meet" (The Encyclopedia of Religion : Volume II).

Prahlada describes nine approaches to the Lord - **Sravanam** (listening to stories of God's glory), **Kirtanam** (singing His Praise), **Smaranam** (recollecting and pondering over God's attributes), **Padasevanam** (serving at the Divine Lotus feet), **Archanam** (floral offering to the accompaniment of the recitation of God's names), **Vandanam** (prostration) **Dasyam** (service), **sakhyam** (friendship) and **atmanivedanam** (surrender of oneself to God). Lord Krishna identifies four categories of people who turn to God—those in distress, those seeking illumination, those seeking material possession and the men of wisdom. Two kinds of devotees are referred to in the **Bhagavatha Purana** : **Uthamaha** : ( those at a higher level ever poised in God ) and **Madhyamaha** ( those at a lower level turning to God for material benefits). Most of us being mortal and bound by the limitations of our nature pray for limited ends. We present our charter of demands. When one set of demands are fulfilled, we are ready with another. And He meets our demands. The child has to be tempted with a toffee to take medicine or nutritious food. As the child grows into a man or woman, he/she realises that medicine or food is good for its own sake. Man is a grown up child. In the initial stages, he goes to God for what He can or



will give. Gradually he learns to seek God for His own sake. " I will go on giving what you ask till you ask what I want you to ask." (Baba) God is **Kalpaka Vriksha**. Does it not sound strange that standing under it, man should ask for his daily needs when God can flood him with His grace, **ananda** and **shanti** which no amount of material acquisition can bring ?

Prayer may be classified as confessional, petitionary, personal, ritualistic, thanks giving, benedictory, adoring and universal. The elements of these various kinds of prayer are not mutually exclusive. They may overlap. In respect of form and content, prayer admits of a wide range of possibilities. Prayer may consist of syllables with esoteric significance, *slokas and stotras*. What ever be the form and content of prayer, it is charged with potency. Everyone is free to compose his or her own prayer depending on his/her frame of mind, circumstances and needs. A soldier going to the battlefield prayed thus " Lord, I will not have time to think of you. But I pray you, don't forget to think of me." This simple prayer, we can be sure, would not have gone unheeded.

What counts in prayer is not the duration or the number of recitations, but intensity. It is no real prayer when the words go up, but the thoughts remain below. "It is the attitude that matters, not the words muttered or uttered. One can pray, sing devotional songs not with the lips, but with the heart. That is why even the dumb, the stammerer, and the brainless can pray" (Gandhi). " Grace

of Lord does not depend on the number of times you have repeated it. Whom are you going to impress with the numbers? The Lord will respond if you call him once from the depths of your heart. The Lord asks for the heart, the full heart and nothing but the heart " (Baba).

Prayer at the deepest level is built on the triple foundation of love, faith, and aspiration. It is an act of resignation and surrender to the divine will. This surrender leads us to reach out for life's highest purpose, aims and ideals. The ultimate end of prayer, is identification or merging with the divine in oneself. " In prayer, spiritual energy which otherwise would slumber, does become active" (William James). It is the key to unlock the treasure house of divine experience and plunge into the depths of ecstasy and serenity.

"Prayer generates spiritual currents and produces a rare tranquility of the mind. It elevates the whole emotional nature and is accompanied by inward grace, inner strength and a sense of oneness with the Supreme Being. The intensive purified feelings raised in the act of prayer bring about the most beneficial change in the heart. The receptive attitude of the praying mind puts the soul of man with the infinite, links it with the cosmic power house of inexhaustible energy and surcharges it with strength, grace and light. When prayers are raised on foundations of absolute devotion, purity of motive, detachment from all worldly concerns, and unyielding faith in the Divine they lead the inner being of man into the highest spiritual experience " (Swami



Sivananda).

Prayer is a potent force to elevate the soul. It is an inward quest, an intense yearning for God's grace. Prayer opens the door of heart to let in God and let out ego, to let in love and let out hate, let in faith and let out hatred, let in humility and let out spiritual pride to let in God's light and let out ignorance. Prayer is not begging or bargaining. By praying not to get more, but be more, we discover a way to serve, a purpose for which we live. It is a means of self-knowledge and self-discovery.

In prayer, we expose our weaknesses to ourselves and God, seeking His grace to attune our lives to His goodness, love, justice and mercy. Prayer does not change God. It changes us, deepens our insight, clarifies our understanding, enriches and expands our consciousness and works as a healing force.

Prayer brings God into our transactions with our fellow human beings. We gain an awareness of their needs and the wisdom to respond in the right spirit. We learn to become more tolerant and forgiving. Prayer develops in us a resolution to good life and conduct. It fills us with an intense desire to be worthy members of the Kingdom of God. Prayer leads to quiet meditation which culminates in the sacred, purifying silence when our whole being vibrates with the living, dynamic, divine presence.

#### PRAYER: A FEW ILLUSTRATIONS

I know neither **mantra** nor **yantra**; I know not songs of praise; I do

not know how to invoke you or meditate. I do not know the stories about you. I do not know the **mudras**. I do not cry out in anguish. I know only this, that taking refuge in you alone will destroy my sorrows.

You have many worthy sons; among them I am the most insignificant. O Mother! it does not become you to give me up for there may be a bad son, but never a bad mother. There is none to beat me in sin, none to surpass you in forgiveness. Knowing this, O mother, do what is proper: (Adi Sankara)

\* \* \* \* \*

Lead, Kindly light, amid the encircling gloom

Lead thou me on!

The night is dark, and I am far from home

Lead thou me on!

Keep thou my feet; I do ask to see

The distant scene - one step enough for me.

I was never thus, nor prayed that thou  
Should lead me on;

I lov'd to choose and see my path; but  
now

Lead thou me on!

I lov'd the garish day; and spite of fears  
Pride rul'd my will; remember not past years

So long Thy power hath bless'd, sure it  
still

Will lead me on

O'er moor, and fen, o'er crag and torrent  
till



The night is gone  
And with the morn, those angel faces  
smile  
Which I have lov'd so long and lost  
awhile.

- Cardinal Newman

★ ★ ★

### Jewish Prayer

We have abused and betrayed.  
We are cruel. We have destroyed and  
embittered other people's lives. We were  
false to ourselves. We have gossiped  
about others and hated them. We have  
insulted and jeered. We were obstinate.  
We have robbed and stolen. We have  
transgressed through unkindness. We  
have been violent and weak. We have  
practised extortion. We yielded to strong  
desires and our zeal was misplaced.

Yet you know everything, hidden  
and revealed. You know the mysteries  
of the universe and the intimate secrets  
of every one alive. You probe our body's  
state. You see into the heart and mind.  
Nothing escapes you, nothing is hidden  
from your gaze.

Our God and God of our fathers,  
have mercy on us, and pardon all our  
sins. Grant atonement for all our  
inequities forgiveness for all our  
transgressions.

★ ★ ★

This is my prayer to thee, my Lord -  
Strike, strike at the root of penury in my  
heart  
Give me the strength lightly to bear my  
joys and sorrows,  
Give me the strength to make my love  
fruitful in service.  
Give me the strength never to disown  
the poor or bend my knees before insolent  
might  
Give me the strength to raise my mind

above daily trifles  
Give me the strength to surrender my  
strength to thy will with love.

- Rabindranath Tagore

★ ★ ★

Lord, make me a channel of your peace,  
that

Where there is hatred, I bring love  
Where there is injury, pardon  
Where there is doubt, faith  
Where there is despair, hope  
Where there is darkness, light  
Where there is sorrow, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may  
console rather than be consoled  
Understand rather than be understood  
Love rather than be loved.

For it is in giving that we receive  
It is in forgiving that we are forgiven  
It is in dying that we are born to eternal  
life.

- St Francis of Assissi

Lord, we pray for the power to be  
gentle; the strength to be forgiving; the  
patience to be understanding; and the  
endurance to accept the consequences of  
holding to what we believe to be right.

May we put the trust in the power  
of good to overcome evil and the power of  
love to overcome hatred. We pray for  
the vision to see and the faith to believe  
in a world emancipated from violence, a  
new world where fear shall no longer  
lead men to commit injustice, nor  
selfishness make them bring suffering  
to others.

Help us to devote our whole life  
and thought and energy to the task of  
making peace, praying always for the  
inspiration and power to fulfil the  
destiny for which we are created.

(Week of Prayer for World Peace 1978).

✱



# ON VIKRAM SETH'S 'THE GOLDEN GATE'

— Dr. T. Vasudeva Reddy

The Golden Gate is a kind of book  
that leads you by force to the iron gate  
or miry life mowed down by fate  
that loudly laughs with a quizzical look  
It gives a faint feel of American life  
full of shallow show and mental strife  
wretched results of the reeking riches  
more dreadful than Macbeth's witches  
Does it portray life or depict death  
or death in life or life in death  
Still it shows the flow of birth  
through love or lust in spite of dearth  
The Golden Gate presents squalor  
There is neither a tinge of

glittering gold  
nor a streak of shining silver to behold  
it is packed with rusty iron and pallor

John's life is a sombre journey  
from a sordid state of neurosis  
to the pathetic plight of psychosis  
punctuated by fluctuating agony  
By the time he becomes a man  
he is deprived of the proper woman  
His youth ends with no ray of hope  
but in distressed darkness to grope.  
Liz is neither a cool manoeuvring minx  
nor a wise imperturbable sphinx

She is calm, warm and vivacious  
bold, cold, dynamic and tenacious  
while Jan's love for John deserves a pat  
Liz loves him as much as she  
loves her cat.

Jan's short span is one of intense love  
and loving kindness, herself a dove;  
her determined dedication to sculpture  
wills our hearts with ringing rapture  
The short circuit of her life, her fate,  
is charged with pathos at any rate  
She is granted posthumous success futile  
in the proud fields of art and love fertile  
though the writer, her Brahma,  
chills her heart  
and thrills in cutting her career short.  
Phil with all his intellect is a  
homeosexual

satiates his lust by making to  
Ed love unusual  
and wisely turns to his sister Liz to wed  
whom John likes as she is a  
dynamite in bed.

The Golden Gate opens the gazing gate  
to make free play of homosexuality  
gives a versified version of sensuality  
exhibitionism and perversion  
and its fate



# TO SLEEP

— M.B. Thakur

Sorry, dear sleep, did I disturb thee?  
 Some frolicking fancies frequent me.  
 Salutary delight bequeathed by you,  
 Stifled so soon, Alas. What can I do ?  
 Night has nightmares to scare away you,  
 Day has day dreams to decoy me too,  
 Aloof in agony when pleasures parted you  
 Elbowed and estranged what could you do ?

Feel offended ? Well, fiercely fie me on,  
 Forgive me first, forget then just anon,  
 On doom's day, you'd have a mighty say,  
 What shall we do together, wouldn't you say ?




---

## ON VIKRAM SETH'S 'THE GOLDEN GATE'

*(continued from previous page)*

The rhyme dryly sounds for sound's sake  
 while the lines limp and move sense to  
 make

His verse hardly enters the realm of  
 feeling

nor does it convey any emotion peeling  
 Even a fatal accident fails to move  
 nor does the anti-nuclear speech prove  
 effective in bringing a radical change  
 even in the Lungless city of narrow range

Drawing dimly there are lines and lines  
 for something else the reader pines.

In fact it will be more apt  
 to rechristen The Golden Gate  
 as Cat's Victory or The Golden Cat  
 that pleads for our attention rapt.  
 Often the author pokes his nose  
 and proudly intrudes with a heavy dose  
 The constant authorial interference  
 is meant to be a pointer of reference  
 In fact it neither explains nor edifies  
 but often the norms of decency it defies  
 Is this work a poem or a novel or an epic  
 a parody or a mimicry or a mock-epic  
 Indeed it is a queer patch-work quilt  
 with flimsy threads it is loosely built





# FROM SELF-ALIENATION TO SELF-ADJUSTMENT IN ANITA DESAI'S "WHERE SHALL WE GO THIS SUMMER?"

— M.A. Waheed

There is an important character which traverses the path of self-alienation before making a truck with the realities of the life and self-adjustment in Sita, the heroine of Anita Desai's novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Anita Desai's fictional outlook seems to have undergone a significant transformation by the time she came to write this novel. Her preoccupation with the fascinating vistas of the diseased psyche of hyper sensitive individuals is not so much altered. But whereas in her earlier novels, characters caught in the maze of life's problems committed suicide or sought some such melodramatic solution, the heroine of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* after moving dangerously off the course of the well-established and generally accepted path of life, returns to it in time to make up for the lee-way. In an interview given to Atma Ram, Anita Desai makes it clear that suicide would have been "too melodramatic an alternative" for the middle-aged woman that the heroine is.

The novel depicts the tension between a sensitive wife, Sita and the rational, practical and worldly husband, Raman. Husband-wife discord, inadequacy of their mutual love relationship and disaffection is the major theme in the novel. Like *Cry, the Peacock* and *Voice in the City* this novel also deals deeply with the theme of marital dissonance. The natural flow of affection between Sita and Raman is very often intact but more frequently it is blocked due to misunderstanding, lack of adequate forbearance and patience. The disaffection

proceeds primarily from their temperaments. Raman in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* is a successful businessman, realistic, having a rather pragmatic view about life. Sita is over sensitive, keen-eyed, poetic and imaginative, having more than ordinary sense. If Raman is social and extrovert, Sita is introvert. If Raman thinks only of the immediate present, Sita is foresighted and has higher notions about life than the average woman will have. Because of their temperamental differences many points of discord between them occur and their responses to life are different.

Sita, the protagonist of the novel has four children and is reluctant to deliver or to abort the fifth one. She wants to retain it in her womb because she is afraid of exposing the child to the violence in the modern world by giving birth. Fed up with the dreary metropolitan life in Bombay and tormented by the paranoiac fear of her fifth and reluctant pregnancy, she goes to the magic island, Manori in the hope of preventing the delivery with the help of miracles. There on the island, her miracles fail and instead of finding peace, she becomes alienated. She realises and returns home to continue her passive life. T.S. Anand aptly finds her reason for her return and says :

[Sita] She had realised the difference between the necessity and the wish, between what a man wants and what he is compelled to do. Her desire to bear the child and return with Raman to the main land



signifies her return to life, community and society... Existence is not possible in an insulated stage of being, rather existence implies being with others.

The story of the novel is told in a series of flashbacks with a clever ordering of past events. The division of the novel orders the events. The first section is devoted to Sita's coming to the "Magic Island" Manori along with her daughter Menaka and son Karan. The second part deals with Sita's life at Manori for twenty years before her second visit to the islet. The third part is about her choice of the future course. Desai adopts the pattern of monsoon winds to convey the tumult in Sita's mind. In her interview with Atma Ram, she says, "I wanted the book to follow the pattern of monsoon together darkly and threateningly to pour down wildly and passionately and then withdraw quietly and calmly". This enables her to delineate the inner life of her heroine who is the central figure in the novel.

Sita is the daughter of a well-known freedom fighter who is looked upon by his disciples as "the second Gandhi". As most of her father's life is spent in jail, she has no mother to look after her. She is denied the regular life of a normal child. She lives a strange and unusual life. She was required to spend days on end away from home, at different places. There was no schooling to discipline her. Her sense of belonging was extremely tenuous :

She belonged, if to anyone, to this whole society that existed at that particular point in history like a lamb does to its flock and saw no reason why she should belong to one family

alone (Page 85).

After independence, Sita's father has selected Manori, a small island to settle. He is accompanied by his disciples and his family. He calls his house "Jeevan Ashram". "The Home of Soul". It is at this island, that he tries to put his social theories into practice. Many social welfare activities are undertaken by him, including digging of a well for the villagers. He offers advice to the villagers in regard to agriculture. Many strange things happen on the island. Her father cures the people stung by scorpion. Childless people also approach for children. One of the villagers uses the word "magic" and all repeat it. In a short time he becomes a legend. His *chelas* who used to take care of his daughter, Sita, "called him a saint, his critics a charlatan, the villagers a wizard and each produced evidence to prove his theory" (P.75). Sita also used to spend her time in the company of her brother, Jeevan and sister, Rekha. In course of time, her father's admirers grow large in number lured by his miracles. To Sita, her father remains an enigma. She forms uncertain and vague impressions about him. It is a mystery to Sita whether her father cures people by magic or by medicines. She is told by her brother Jeevan that her mother left for Benaras leaving her husband and children. She is upset by the sad news of her mother's running away. Her mother's figure even haunts her and turns her into a wanderer. All these experiences make Sita lose her grip on life and develops in her an uncertain and unrealistic attitude towards life. It is a question before her why her mother left her husband who is said to be a second Gandhi. After the death of her father, she is brought to Bombay by Raman, the son of her father's old friend, Deedar. Raman arranged funeral



ceremony of her father. She is admitted in the college by Raman. Later on, he marries her "out of pity, out of lust, out of sudden will for adventure, and because it was inevitable" (P.99).

Sita's husband Raman is a businessman with good public relations. He is busy with his vocational affairs and can spare little time for her. He represents pragmatism and an acceptance of the materialistic values of the society. He finds his activities more fulfilling than his relations with his wife. He wants to exercise his full authority over her. His wife, Sita finds her life dull, and monotonous. She anticipates Raman to be the life lover, making her realise how valuable she is to him. Raman, however, does not fulfil her wishes. Raman focuses his energies on his business and becomes an escapist. By nature, he is a perfectionist. He has his own morals, own standards. As a consequence the temperaments of Sita and her husband remain poles apart. They suffer from marital disharmony like Maya and Gautama of *Cry, the Peacock*. As a result, Sita hypersensitive as she is, feels marital dissatisfaction with her husband.

Sita strongly feels that marriage is a farce and all the human relationships are false in the absence of love. Unfortunately, she feels very unhappy even in the company of her in-laws.

Therefore she flouts the norms and values of society. Besides this, Sita also observes that people in Bombay are just for materialistic life. They are "nothing - nothing but appetite and sex" (P.47).

Once Sita tells Raman that she has "only one happy moment" in their long married life. It is in the "Hanging gardens" where she sees a Muslim woman, laying her head in the lap of an old man. He looks down

at her and caresses her tenderly. Sita has never seen such tender and gentle moments in her life. In Sita's view, life without love is meaningless. She says, "Their lives seemed to have one - if not meaning then a secret - a strange, divine secret" (P.148). But Raman does not understand the "divine secret".

Fairly early in the novel, the episode in which Sita describes their encounter with a foreign tourist who was on his way from Ajanta and Ellora. "He seemed to be brave", she observed when Raman asked her about him. For Raman, he is a fool as "he did not even know which side of the road to wait on". But Sita identifies herself with him. Like him, she is also a person seeking an adventurous life. She too wants to wander like the stranger without the knowledge of the route. This shows her romantic vision of life and her immense interest in unfettered life.

Sita is estranged from her husband and children because of her emotional reactions to the incidents that occur to her in society. She does not like violence of any kind whether in nature, society or in personal life. To her disgust she finds it pervasive. In the novel, Desai depicts the gulf between Sita and her family in the episode of the eagle and the crows with an emphasis on Sita's sensitivity to violence. The ruthless attack of crows on the eagle is a terrible sight. She is shocked at the sight of the dead eagle as Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* is shocked by the sight of her dead pet dog. The situation objectifies for Sita the conflict in her own life. She identifies herself with the dead eagle. However her husband, Raman views this situation in a different way. He is not worried about it. That is the reason, Charmanzel Dudt aptly remarks about the novel that :



*Where Shall We Go This Summer?* is about two journeys, one undertaken to escape from immediate surroundings, another to move towards something in the future created out of the illusions we all held out of the past.

Raman's sadistic delight in Sita's failure to protect the eagle intensifies her agony. Her husband and the children do not understand her problems due to the communication gap between them. They are quite indifferent to her predicament. This trivial incident creates a gulf separating Sita from her husband and the children.

Another incident which describes the fight of *ayas* in the street brings out Sita's repulsion to violence with a stress on her sentiment being Karan, Sita's young son is sent with the *aya* to play with the other children of the neighbourhood. While the children are busy in their play, the *ayas* are immersed in the gossip about their lovers and *memsahibs*. But within a short time Sita found a clash and clamour of angry women. The *ayas* started quarreling. Suddenly, Sita comes out of the house, pulls out her son, Karan and orders her *aya* Rosie to come out of the fray. She reflects: "It is like living in the wilds". She tells her husband that there is no security to anyone in this violent society. Raman who is practical and insensitive to such happenings takes it easy.

Once Menaka unconsciously crumples a sheaf of new buds on the small potted plant, talking with her mother about a party. Sita is hurt by the sight of her daughter's insensitivity and callousness.

Again in another incident, Sita found her husband's indifference towards the newspaper pictures of Vietnam War the photo

of a woman weeping over a grave and a crowd outside the Rhodesian jail. She did not like Menaka's tearing Sunday water colours into "long strips of meaningless colour", Karan demolishing his toys with Karate blows.

Sita becomes hysterical like Maya of *Cry, the Peacock* and starts tossing clothes, smoking cigarettes and hurling books. Raman is baffled to notice this emotional upheaval. Even though she is forty, she has no control over herself. Sita's becoming pregnant at this age is regarded with distaste by Raman. As days pass by, the very atmosphere of Bombay becomes suffocating. She feels compelled to retreat. It causes her irrational flight to the island ostensibly to prevent the birth of her child into a violent world. While the Hanging Gardens episode clearly points out her neurotic need for the tender attention of her father, the pregnancy provides an ideal occasion to think of the magic island as a source of release. So, when Raman casually asks, "*Where Shall We Go This Summer?*" she almost spontaneously suggests that they should go to Manori, her father's island.

She shifted to Manori island along with the daughter Menaka and son Karan leaving other family members in Bombay but to her surprise the magic and the special charm that once belonged to the island are no more to be found. She is disappointed with the islanders.

The escape to the island of Manori and its primitive conditions is an attempt to capture the care-free days of her childhood where time stood still and yet it was no paradise. Corruption, selfishness, egoism have all had their place there.



Sita found the road, the bullock cart, the fields and the men the women of the island, all reveal the ravages of time. The fields are only "pits of mud and slush". The old house is full of dust and cobwebs. These unpleasant changes irritate Sita who comes here for peace and tranquility. The old servant Moses and his wife Mariam become lazy. With these situations at Manori, her children Menaka and Karan express their dissatisfaction to continue their stay. Sita is disillusioned with this atmosphere on the island and soon she realises her folly. She admits, "It was no place in which to give birth. There was no magic here - the magic was gone".

When Sita is passing through such crises in life, Raman visits Manori island to fetch her away as she finds him likeable for all that he does for the family. Moreover, her life at Manori island restores her to the world of hard facts and awakens her to the truth of her situation. In its very failure to offer the magic of the earlier era it provides her an ideal setting to fight her affliction. Therefore, she takes the final decision to follow Raman to Bombay. It is the crucial turning point in her mental journey. So far she has considered giving birth as an act of violence but now she realises, according to Usha Bande, "..... a seed fallen from the tree of life into the cosmic womb, must break open. Bursting out of the enclosure of the womb is a violent activity, but in its impetuosity it is creative".

Therefore, betrayed, defeated and humiliated, Sita is forced to come back to Bombay. She is compelled to welcome the child into the world of violence and suffering. On being asked about the fate of the fifth child, Anita Desai in her interview with Atma Ram answers :

It is born. It lives. It compromises. It accepts the dullness, either closes its eyes to or else condones destruction, ugliness, rottenness. In other words, it leads an ordinary life of the kind its mother tried so desperately to change only to find she could not.

Thus her return to Bombay brought her a new child safely, Menaka's admission to medical college is gained and the children are reared. And also her return to Bombay is a symbolic reenactment of the scene twenty years ago when she followed Raman pitying herself for her helplessness but this time it is of her own free will that she follows him.

Normally Desai's heroines act violently, but here, is a positive change. Sita reconciles herself to her lot. She strikes a balance between her inner self and the outer world, her prosaic self and her poetic sensibility, her individual self and the societal consciousness. Rightly does B Rama Chandra Rao observe: "The novel may, thus, be seen as a parable on the inability of human beings to relate the inner with the outer, the individual with the society".

Thus Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* is an answer to temperamental incompatibility and the resultant self-alienation. This novel is in contrast to the other novels like *Cry, the Peacock*, *Voices in the city* and *Fire on the Mountain*, in which the problems of frustration of the female characters come to violent and tragic ends. This novel presents a positive approach to the existential predicament. Sita neither dies in the end nor kills anybody nor does she become mad. She simply compromises with her destiny. Self adjustment is the remedy for self-alienation.





# THE BARD OF 'SIVABHARATHAM'

— J. Hanumath Sastry

"He that would hope to write well hereafter in laudable things", says Milton, "ought himself to be a true poem". Sri Gadiyaram Venkata Sesha Sastri is one who has lived up to this lofty Miltonic ideal. He developed in himself the ideal man before he could write literature, which is the expression of the ideal.

Gadiyaram was born on 7-4-1894 in a cultured family at Nemalladinne village in Jammalamadugu taluk of Cuddapah District. At an early age he came to Proddatur and received instruction in Sahitya, Tarka and Vyakarana from Sri Rupavatharam Sesha Sastri. He also studied the Yajurveda and the Upanishads at Sri Shatdarsanam Vasudeva Avadhani. Later he specialised on his own in Jyotisha and Vastu Sastra. Gadiyaram was drawn to various forms of versification and started composing not merely in various kinds of metres but in a novel way also. He became an adept in Ashtavadhana and in collaboration with Sri Durbhaka Raja Sekhara Satavadhani (the author of "*Rana Pratap Simha Charitramu*") he delighted people with his literary genius in many Ashtavadhanams and Satavadhanams at various places and won laurels. He worked as a Telugu pandit in the Municipal High School at Proddatur. He edited for a couple of years, "*Brahmanandini*" a monthly devoted to literature and culture.

He opines that a poet's spirit should respond to his country's spirit.

True to this poetic ideal, he brought out his masterpiece "*Sri Sivabharatham*" in 1943, when the freedom movement was in its full swing. With its theme of liberation, the poem inspired the Telugu people with profound patriotism and the poet was hailed as a great inspirer.

There are certain works of art with an inexhaustible gift of suggestion to which criticism may return again and again. Gadiyaram's magnum opus, "*Sivabharatham*" is one such immortal work. The title is intriguing and significant. The poem is not only the life-history of Sivaji but also of Bharathamatha. Free from prose, it has in all two thousand three hundred and eighty nine verses in varied metres. It is divided into eight 'Aaswaasas' or books. Book I narrates the birth of the hero, Sivaji against the back-ground of the patriotic struggle of his heroic father, Shaji, to found an independent State as a bastion of the Hindu Dharma. After touching upon the patient wait of the enslaved people for a liberator the second book depicts Sivaji's and shows that the child is the father of the man.

Sivaji's marriage at Sivaneru, his visit to the court of Bijapur Sultan, his protest against cow-slaughter and the Sultan's pragmatic solution to it, his training into a great soldier and ruler under the tutelage of Dadaji Khandadev and finally his decision to found with the help of the Mavales, a new independent State, are the other aspects of this 'Asawaasa', Sivaji's taking over of the fort Torna, passing away of



## THE BARD OF 'SIVABHARATHAM'

59

Dadaji, annexation by Sivaji, through parleys, of Chakanu, Supa, Simhagadh and Purandara territories, Tukaram's epistolary blessings to Sivaji, Sivaji's conquest of many forts in the South, his noblest courtesy shown to a Muslim woman brought captive by Abaji, Samartha Ramadasa's inspiring meeting with Sivaji, and arrest of Shaji as son's accomplice by Bijapur Sultan are the highlights of Book III.

Shaji's release from prison through his son's sagacity, defeat of Bijapur Sultan's army by Sivaji, his fight with the Mores, his second journey of conquest, and his pact with Aurangazeb form the strands of narrative in the Book IV. Book V is devoted to the events culminating in the death of Afzalkhan and to the intensified attack by Bijapur Sultan's armies, Baaji's death and finally to the Sultan's virtual surrender to Sivaji. Book VI deals with Sivaji's political and military moves to outmanoeuvre those of the formidable army of Aurangazeb. Book VII celebrates Sivaji's visit to the Delhi Court, his imprisonment and escape, and the capture of Simhagadh and the death of Tanaji. Book VIII the last part, closes the poem with the description of the coronation of Sivaji.

*Sivabharatham* is a historical epic par excellence. Passing through the crucible of Gadiyaram's powerful creative imagination, the dry as dust historical details simply tingle with life. Absolutely true to history, the narration at the same time gains in picturesqueness and characterisation. Conjured by the poet's magic wand, the

characters of the past come to life, walk before us and thrill us—yes, thrill us to the core of our being. The great poet not only makes history picturesque, recreates the heroes and patriots of the heroic national past of our sacred mother land, but also enshrines in his work universal values : honour, patriotism, courage, courtesy, loyalty, tolerance and all that is noblest in the Hindu way of life.

Gadiyaram's vision is archetypal in that his characters are represented as archetypes reminding us of those that have become part and parcel of Hindu legend and mythology. For instance the poet sees Jijiya as Satyabhama, Katyayani, Sita, Sakuntala, Divine Cow, Subhadra, Vinatha etc. in different contexts. Sivaji is seen as Lord Siva, Adisankara, Garuda, Bhargava Rama, Bhima, Vamana, Parikshit etc. The poet opens the classic with an awareness of the racial memory— a supremely classic and unique manner indeed. The poet's aim is perhaps to instil in the reader an awareness of the glorious Dharma of the ancient land and the ever vigilant need to safeguard it from the marauders. This makes him think of Sivaji, a great protector of it in the past.

*Sivabharatham* is a moving epic drama. The narrative runs with rare dramatic ease so much so that many wonder at the plasticity and felicity of Telugu. Wielding the language most admirably, the poet seems to have excelled also in the dramatic quality of the verse. The colloquies between Shaji and Lukaji, and between Lukaji and Jijiya throb with life. Such dramatic



episodes which are sixteen in number give the epic a dramatic form too. The conversational idiom expolited by the poet is so delightful that it lingers in our memory even after we lay down the book. The verse has the kind of felicity that is seen in Shakespeare's mature blank verse. Its perusal is a lasting pleasure. What a charm of readability! What a bewitching exploitation of the idiom ! The verse is properly decked with the beauties of the Telugu idiom. The language is familiar but not coarse, elegant but not ostentatious. Chilukuri Narayana Rao, a great scholar, calls it "a stream of honey". Viswanatha Satyanarayana described it as "the sweet flow of the Ganges". Rallapalli says, "Its flow is radiant, serene and sweet". The imagery of *Sivabharatham* is bold and novel. It is pre-eminently agricultural as pointed out by a scientist-litterateur. Dr. Sardesai Tirumala Rao in his "*Sahitya Tathvamu- Sivabharatha Darsanam*", a close reading of the poem. The imagery shows the poet's identification with the agricultural country, that is India. Some critics dismiss the poem as a mere narrative without any architectonics. But they forget that the narrative here does supremely well its duty of capturing the stirring human drama of the past. No architectonics is needed. The narrative with its texture is enough and to spare. It will make the epic go all the way through posterity.

Honours have been showered on the poet for this epic. He was presented with 'Kaviganda Penderam' (a gold anklet) and swarna Veera Kankanamu.

In the *Bhuvana Vijayam* held in 1945 at Hindupur he was awarded a cash prize of Rs. 500/ as the best poet in Telugu by the composite Madras Govement in 1948. He had the honour of 'Gajarchanam' (Elephant ride) too. Many literacy associations and princely states lionised him. In 1967, the Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi honoured him with a fellowship and a gold medal. The silver jubilee of *Sivabharatham* was celebrated in 1968 at Proddatur under the president-ship of Sri Rallapalli Anantha Krishna Sarma and the poet was felicitated with "Kanakabhishekam." In June 1974 during the Chatrapati Sivaji Tricentenery celebrations the Maratha mandir of Bombay greeted him with a gold medal and purse for his *Sivabaratham*. This classic brought him some more honours. He was a nominated member of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council from 1959 to 1968. He was the Vice President of the A.P. Sahitya Akademi from 1969 to 1973. For his services to the cause of literature and language Sri Venkateswara University conferred on him, an honorary Doctorate in 1976.

Gadiyaram has more than twenty works to his credit. His "*Srinatha Kavita Samrajyam*" shows his keen critical insight into the works of Srinatha. His '*Raghunatheeyamu*' is another historical poem. '*Govardhana Saptasati*' and '*Uttara Ramayanam*' are some of his translations from Sanskrit. His *Ramayana (Valmiki Hridaya-vishkaranam)* containing seven thousand verses has been published recently.

At the ripe age of eighty six he passed away on 20th September 1980 at Proddatur. His was a life of achievement and supreme fulfilment. \*



# THE POLITICAL SCENE

**Mamidipudi Pattabhiram**

The next four months will be crucial for the nation. Elections to the Lok Sabha are going to be held, most probably, in April 1996 and all the political parties are gearing up for this important event which is going to decide their fate. The ruling Congress (I) has a big stake inasmuch as it is in power and there are wild guesses that it might not come back. But there is no decisive evidence on which one could write off the ruling party nor are the other parties including the formidable BJP or even the National Front in a position as of now to offer a big challenge to the Congress (I). The National Front is now a pale shadow of what it was few years ago when it was first formed. Even the Janata Dal which is the most important constituent of the National Front is split and the two Communist parties have not added to their strength in the last five years. Thus the Congress(I) is not in such a hopeless position as some people seem to believe although elections are necessarily a gamble and it is difficult to say which party will finally come out successful. It is also being mentioned that the days of one party rule are over and the country has to go for an alliance to give a stable government. Coalition Government have been total failures at the Centre and in the States as experience shows and hence a single party rule is the best guarantee for stability. And without stability there could be no development or progress. Thus the Indian voter has a very responsible task before him but since the majority of the electorate is still illiterate it is up to the political parties to educate them. The time before them is short but they still will have to work hard. The Election Commission is getting ready to conduct this democratic

exercise although in respect of Kashmir it has expressed its reservations and even turned down the proposal of the Government to go ahead with the poll. There has been bitter criticism of the decision of the Commission but there is no way the Government could have a poll conducted against the wishes of the Commission. The Prime Minister believes that the holding of elections would ultimately pave the way for normality in the State whereas the Commission had argued that normality is the prerequisite of a poll. Thus there is an irreconcilable difference between the Government and the Commission on the question of elections in Kashmir. However the matter has been taken to the Supreme Court which is examining the question whether the Commission was at all right in rejecting the Government's plea for holding the elections. Meanwhile what has happened in Parliament during its winter session which could be the last for the present Lok Sabha was something unparalleled and deserves full consideration.

For almost a week the two Houses of Parliament were in a State of seige with the Opposition party members stalling the proceedings following the rancorous discussion on what they chose to call the "telecom Scam" demanding the resignation "here and now" of the Union Minister of State for Communications, Mr. Sukh Ram. The charge against him was that the entire Scheme of bids for providing telephone services was defective and the favour shown to a particular firm in various forms was totally wrong besides being unjustified. The merits of this particular issue apart, what has been worrying factor is the way work in



the two apart, Houses has been severely hampered. The belligerent posture of the Opposition members who did not care to heed the pleas of the presiding officers to conduct themselves in an orderly fashion did not enhance their credibility although their right to embarrass the Government on an issue of this kind is never in question. In fact it is the legitimate business of the Opposition parties to bring down a Government if it is possible, but in doing so they cannot adopt any means they choose.

The rules of procedure for the guidance of the members of Parliament do clearly state that a member is not to interrupt any member who is speaking by disorderly expression although occasional interruptions are allowed to clear a point or seek information. Continuous interruptions mar the proceedings and the dignity of the House as a whole. When the Speaker rises to address the House members are enjoined to hear him in silence and any member who is then speaking or offering to speak is required to sit down. These rules are followed more in the breach than in their observance and the result is that a good deal of allotted business remains unfinished. An unintended result of the obstructionist attitude of the members is that the importance of Parliament goes devalued in the public eye. The Opposition may have gained a point or two but in the process the damage done to Parliament as a pivotal instrument in the present day Indian polity is immeasurable. Perhaps the Opposition will gain much by strictly adhering to the rules of business and caring for the directions given by the Speaker.

It must also be noted that Parliament is not the place for settling scores and by immobilising the House the Opposition may not really achieve the objective of bringing

the Government to book in an ample measure. Only the other day the members were protesting against the adjournment of the House on four occasions to mourn the death of some members but all this ended up as a mere academic exercise when the same members did not allow the House to go on until their demands for the setting up of a House Committee to go into the telecom scam and the resignation of the Minister concerned was accepted. The adjournment of the House following their unruly behaviour did not seem to have bothered them in the least. Of course this is not a rare feature and what happens ultimately is that good deal of legitimate business gets transacted within minutes without the members even realising what has happened.

In December last year, for instance, the two Houses could not carry on the normal work until the Government was made to yield to the demand of the Opposition that the report on the Sugar scandal presented by the Gyan Prakash committee was made public. The Opposition did score a point in that the Government finally gave in and the Kalpanath Rai had to quit as Minister. But the entire episode led to considerable unpleasantness even as the Speaker's plea that the rules did not permit the chair to direct the Government to dispose of a document (Gyan Prakash report in this case) in a particular way unless it was of a statutory or constitutional nature. The report did not fit into either category and it was entirely at the discretion of the Government to handle the matter as it liked. Flouting the Speaker's rulings does not help in the smooth functioning of Parliament and if members are keen to focus issues of public importance on the floor of the House it should have to be done strictly according to well laid procedural practices.



## THE POLITICAL SCENE

63

A few months earlier during the monsoon session, it may be recalled there was a deadlock over the controversial Action Taken Report on the securities scandal and stepping up their campaign for the withdrawal of the Report, the Opposition parties, barring the AIADMK and the Muslim League, resigned from all Parliamentary Committees and also decided to boycott the rest of the session of Parliament. The Speaker's plea of order having been rejected he had to repeatedly adjourn the House. The stalemate continued for some days even as the Prime Minister expressed his anguish over the development leading to the Parliament functioning without the major Opposition parties. It is not really relevant how the deadlock was finally resolved but the fact of the matter was every other business including legislative work had come to nought. Even granting that the public do not appreciate the niceties of Parliamentary practice and procedure they do recognise that Parliament's work is greatly hampered by some members who persistently defy the chair.

There have also been occasions when members persisted in their demand for scrapping the question hour to enable the House to discuss some "urgent" issue although the Chair would not permit any departure from the accepted procedure. After all the question hour is an integral part of the day's proceedings and in fact the most important segment of the work scheduled. It is understandable why the members should ask for its suspension knowing its importance. Several ministerial heads had rolled because the Ministers concerned could not answer the supplementaries in a convincing manner. And members who are

concerned about the functioning of the House should also note that there had been occasions in the recent past when even the few listed questions could not be taken up just because the members who had given notice of them chose to be absent. This kind of indifferent attitude certainly undermines Parliament which indeed is the highest forum where the accountability of the Government is tested. Of course the loser is the Opposition and not the Government although it would not be entirely correct to blame only the Opposition for eroding the importance of Parliament.

It is no doubt true that the "scenes" in Parliament could not be entirely avoided because on occasions tempers are so frayed that letting-off steam, human nature being what it is, cannot be totally impermissible. But repetition of scenes makes them stale, undignified, unpleasant and derogatory to the country as a whole. Quoting what happened on March 1, 1968 in the Rajya Sabha Mr. H. N. Mukherjee said the supposedly Council of elders but comprising some who can score points easily over the most rumbustious Lok Sabha members saw for a whole hour or more an unseemly scramble between two well known members -- while the Chair looked helplessly, for both were dauntless wordy fighters -- over something patently trivial. One thing led to another and obviously no other business could be transacted for the rest of the day.

Addressing a conference of Presiding Officers, a former Speaker of the Lok Sabha observed that members in their zeal to raise issues and grievances on the floor of the House have tended to overstep the limits they themselves had laid down in the form of rules and regulations. While the members should ensure that Parliament's time is not usurped by trivialities the Government



should also see that its responses to the Opposition demands on major issues are adequate. It is even more unfortunate that the sessions of Parliament are being curtailed and this is a matter which should receive the urgent attention of the members especially those who adorn the Opposition benches. The long budget session was held in three phases this year contrary to the usual practice and this itself had reduced somewhat the importance of the session itself thereby adversely affecting the normal rhythm. Frequent holidays have also led to interruption of work and even the all-important financial business was transacted in the Lok Sabha in April this year with lightning speed. There was not a murmur from the Opposition benches in protest and the usual spectacle of subjecting the demands of nearly 50 ministries and departments to the guillotine was gone through in minutes. Whether the introduction of the committee system has really helped to educate the members on the performance of the ministries and enabled them to evaluate their work better is a matter which could best be explained only by the members. At a time when so much is being said about judicial activism it would be unfortunate if legislatures all over do not assert their rightful position. There is need for actually increasing the number of sittings of Parliament so that even after the aberrations which per force stall the proceedings on particular days all the work set out for implementation is gone through. Whether it is matters like the securities scam, the nuts and bolts of the economic reforms that have been introduced in a big way, the abysmal

failure of law and order in different parts of the country, the misuse of certain Articles of the Constitution to favour some political parties - these are issues that could be focussed in Parliament with authority and relevance and it is up to the members from all sides to put the nation's most prestigious forum of debate and discussion to the right use. There is no time for trifles and the distortion of the priorities that sometimes dominate Parliament should be wiped out - a task which can again be executed only by its members. It should however be noted that dragging the Supreme Court as has been done by a few opposition members to pronounce its verdict on the telecommunication scam was not exactly a wise thing to do. Besides, the issues involved relate to matters which are primarily for the legislature to determine. Attempting to drag the superior judiciary into the realm of public policy must be deplored. The courts are not there to make up for the deficiencies and the inadequacies of politicians. There may well be some overlapping of jurisdictions but respect for the judiciary requires that Parliament should now go slow with the matter when once the proceedings in the court commence. In fact the members who went to court when Parliament was seized of the matter could be said to have committed a *faux pas* for in the ultimate *analysis* this move would only act as a check on the parliamentarians themselves. As some one said attempting to eat the cake and have it not only is thoroughly improper, it is also bad tactics.

December 20, 1995





# R.D. LAING'S EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY

— Prof. Sripati Ranganadha

Laing was born on October 7, 1927. He spent his boyhood in Glasgow, Scotland. He discovered that he was unwanted by his parents. It was a case of an unwanted child who was never loved.

In his midteens, he painfully witnessed the physical battles around the household. There was a continuous, pathetic strife between his father and grandfather. He was fed up with his father's instructions to him all about "the facts of life" which is fraught with meaningless sex relations.

He joined the medical school in Glasgow and specialised in psychiatry and found the ideas and tools of Freudian psychoanalytic theory useful. He gained the impression that Medicine as a profession particularly psychiatry is sometimes coldly inhuman. His theoretical approach may be classed as a modified form of existential phenomenology. His emphasis is on "need for congruence between feelings and behaviour". He is considered sometimes a radical for he has rejected the idea of psychosis as abnormal. He maintains that the psychotic state is a different way of looking at reality.

He made significant contributions which include :

1. *The Divided Self* (1959) in which he expresses the first statement of his position.
2. *The Politics of Experience* (1967)
3. *The Politics of Family* (1969)

The substance of the first two books is that "madness" is artfully devised to make an insane situation livable. The third one particularly harps on the significance of interpersonal relationships in guiding the interpretation of reality of the individual. In fact, his concepts fit under the interpersonal model.

4. *"Self and others"* (1969) brings out his concept of how individuals feel themselves by the demands of others. They are encouraged not to be their true selves but rather to meet the expectations of others.

5. A semi-autobiographical account of some of his ideas has been provided in the *Facts of Life* (1976).

He describes the normal world as a place where all of us are "bemused and crazed creatures, strangers to our true selves, to one another, and to the spiritual and material world"

6. An account of the family interactions of his wife, daughter and son over a period of six years was published as *Conversations with Adam and Natasha* (1977).

His colleagues have carried forward some of his propositions including :

1. *The Death of the Family* (1970) by David Cooper. Cooper has also set forth his own criticisms with an acknowledgement to Laing in *Psychiatry and Anti Psychiatry* in 1967. In the same lines, Robert Boyers and Robert Orrill have brought out a collection of papers with the title *R.D. Laing and Anti-Psychiatry* (1971)



which presents a bird's eye view of the growing impact of Laing on mental health professions. Ross Speck and Carolyn Atteneave set forth an approach to family therapy largely influenced by the concept of Laing in *Family Networks* 1973.

[This section is heavily drawn from Christopher F. Monte *Beneath The Mask An Introduction to Theories of Personality*, New York: Holt, Rinehart And Winston, 1980 P 382-416.]

**PERSONALITY :** R.D. Laing's views of personality unlike the psychoanalytic conception are a modified version of existential phenomenology which focuses not on the past but on the near future. Existentialism is here taken to be a name given to a number of similar philosophies. Similarly, phenomenology is a name given to a number of similar methodologies.

Laing has characterised children from the conception of birth to the period of intrauterine life. He suggested that "Certain physical and chemical patterns rhythmically established for the fetus during its mother's pregnancy may produce after birth "resonances", that is psychological analogs of the physiological patterns of life before birth".

The chief issue, according to existential approach, in the development of personality is ontological insecurity. It is the feeling of insecurity threatened by non-being (death). In the individuals who succumb to ontological insecurity, there is much discrepancy between their behaviour and their experience.

Laing has described three modes of ontological insecurity in his first major work,

*The Divided Self* (1959).

The three modes are: **Engulfment:** Loss of identity.

**Implosion :** Vacuum of an Empty self, and

**Pertification :** Doubt of being alive.

**ENGULFMENT :** If the individuals want to maintain their identity, they have to struggle to preserve and foster their own existence through a minimal contact or interaction with another. Identity can be realised only in terms of the other. In other words, identity exists in the presence of a complementary personality. A woman, for instance, cannot be a mother without a child.<sup>2</sup> The appropriate strategy employed by persons fearing the sense of engulfment is to free themselves from their isolation and total aloofness.

The emotional entanglement will haunt the victims of bondage throughout their lives. The way out to untwain the knot of loss of identity is to emerge out from human bondage. To resist engulfment, one has to maintain identity (self identity), enhance favourable image (self image), and strive for self expression and self-determination.

**IMPLOSION :** Desensitisation is achieved by eliciting a massive "flood" or implosion of anxiety. One feels empty as there is nothing inside. It means emptying the mind of thoughts due to insecurity. The emptiness has to be filled when the senses of the individuals will rush in from the external world and "obliterate all identity as gas will rush in and obliterate vacuum".<sup>3</sup> They would like to be alone with their own thoughts and



feel uneasy in associating with others. They easily subject themselves to loss of interest, orientation and feel humourlessness. The feelings of aloneness pay the price of loss of their selfhood. They do not achieve the security for which they strive for.

One tries to get oneself inside what one is outside and viceversa; the experiences (the inrush of this forming a compression) that one undergoes what Laing calls 'implosion'. The insecure individuals experience this dread and assume as the vacuum and feel empty. These individuals unconsciously lack any striving for achievement, belittle their own capacity, do not make effort on their own accord, lack goal-centeredness, and abhor coercion or advice and yet do not want to remain independent. This cessation of striving leads to cynicism, mistrust and sometimes over complexity.

**PERTIFICATION :** Pertification is a terrible feeling of people who remain inactive or reduce to the state of lifelessness (deadness) without awareness. The people subject to pertification have the feeling that they transform themselves into a machine (mechanising of life) or robot and can be described by an outside observer as depersonalisation (loss of zest in life). The view of pertified person is that others may manipulate the self through indifference and thereby attempt to dehumanise him/her. The pertified person is frightened of being bored, uninterested and indifferent towards others - a feeling totally determined. Hopelessness and loss of feeling of individuality sets in. Erich Fromm shares similar views of R.D. Laing. Fromm believes that the automation conformist experiences. The loss of self and its substitution by a

pseudo self leave the individual in an intense state of insecurity. He is obsessed by doubt, since being essentially a reflex of other people's expectation of him, he has in a measure lost his identity. In order to overcome the panic resulting from such loss of identity by continuous approval and recognition by others. He does not know who he is, at least the others will know if he acts according to their expectations; if they know, he will know too, if he only takes their word for it.<sup>3A</sup>

**ESSENCE OF EXISTENTIALISM :** A movement known as existentialism came into prominence in Europe after the World War II and then moved into the United States. The thrust of the movement was due to the French resistance to the German occupation. This movement is based on the doctrine that man forms his essence in the course of life he chooses to lead. This doctrine emphasises that the responsibility of man for making his own nature. Distractors consider this movement as a subversive one "tending to degrade human reason, obscure essence and substance, and enthrone naked individualism and subjectivism".<sup>4</sup>

Many American psychologists viewed in early fifties that psychology had lost its glow and grip of the individual as well as human values because it laid too much emphasis on contemporary behaviourism. The basic set of values such as freedom, self-respect, honesty, pleasure, obedience, justice and equality along with perceptions and preferences take shape in the process of socialisation involving the family and the society. These values will influence the human behaviour. Thus existentialism is a concept or view of people that stresses the responsibility of the individual for becoming



the kind of person he/she should be.

**BEHAVIOURISM:** Behavioural psychology investigates only the physical, measurable and objective behaviour of individual and lays stress on deterministic and mechanistic view of man, whereas, existentialism attempts to understand the human condition as it manifests itself in our concrete lived situations which include not only the physical characteristics such as the people and places involved, but also all our moments of joy, absurdity, and indifference as well as the freedom we associate therein. The death of a dear and near one, for instance, need not end in unhappiness, but in sorrow. Nevertheless, the pangs of sorrow fade with time. If one's relation with the affectionately intimate one who is no more was exceedingly cordial, there is no reason for retrospective reproach as the very memory and thought of affectionate intimacy will live and linger on for ever. "Remembering is a dream that comes in waves". (Helga Sandburg, "..... where love begins.") It is, so to say, "the lived situations replay the memorable past records".<sup>4A</sup> Time flies. Memories do not. This thought process is the basis of all our feelings, emotions, and desires. Thoughts are much powerful than actions since they are the seeds of the same. It is through this faculty (mental conditioning) in an instant, that we can relive the past experience, generate happiness or sadness. Experience is a personal and private matter. In fact, we play a movie in our mind in which we see ourselves meeting the score we desire.

Carl Rogers interprets experience as the fundamental psychological reality. As Rogers enunciated this proposition: "Every individual exists in a continually changing world experience of which he is the

centre".<sup>5</sup> Something takes place in a real-life situation. It is so to say *in vivo*.

When action replaces our thoughts, these thoughts lead us into experience. Publius Syrus observes: "Good thoughts even if they are forgotten, do not perish". The Internal thought processes give rise to self-awareness, a consciousness that he/she is, which eventually promotes knowledge of the self as a living, thinking, judging, being.

**VALUE SYSTEM:** The dominant values of existentialism are qualities of life, non conforming, seeking autonomy and loyalty to self. These values are secular and universal in nature. Existential values seek a high tolerance for ambiguity and individuals with differing values.

Existentialism seems to offer a means for humanistically oriented philosophy. This human orientation stresses quality of life rather than material level of living. Our primary thought should be for the dignity of the individuals and for the quality of life. In fact, the quality of life shares with ancient cultures such as wisdom, humility, modesty, foresight, courage, truth, compassion, justice, non-violence, respect and the like. Our present material management derives its clout through "political domain tending to possess political prowess, financial capacity, and military strength" and thereby miserably enhances the material level of living.

Many of our present decisions and actions result from the value system. As we are aware, every social and moral order exist not only external to the individual but also lies within the individual. The internal moral order rests on the human capacity for



self-judgement. As such, self awareness is the prerequisite for moral and value based judgements. As mediator of the internal order, self-awareness determines the means of right and wrong. This ultimately leads to the formation of value system which is a ranking of individual values according to our relative importance.

Humanistic psychology unlike contemporary behaviourism emphasises man's capacity for goodness, creativity and freedom. It construes man as a spiritual and rational, purposeful and autonomous being. He has a higher nature and strives for meaningful existence and well lived, healthy life. This is the part of his essence.

**LOYALTY TO SELF :** The chief characteristics of such people mentioned above are their increased trust in their ownself. They feel free that they will prove competent to meet and challenge and regulate their behaviour as the situation arises. They are generally characterised by independence and self trust.

**EXISTENCE AND ESSENCE :** Existentialism, a combination of philosophy and humanities is based on the analysis of existence of being. The basic theme is the existence of human beings which is given but what people make or mar is left to them. This is referred to as existence (that one is) and essence (what one is). The individual embarks on the processes of living to enhance his/her being, to expand his/her knowledge of self and others and to operationalise his/her personality in any activity he/she undertakes.

Existence is never static and is in constant process of becoming something new.

Mathew Arnold observes : not merely "to be" but also "to become" so that each tomorrow finds an individual farther than to-day. Becoming (action) implies direction and continuity can be broken. Being-in-becoming stresses self-reliance, self-realisation and development of all aspects of the self on integrated whole.

**CONTRIBUTIONS :** Existentialism has been described as a somewhat unsystematic system of philosophy. It is neither scientific nor behavioural oriented science. It emphasises the living immediacy of experience as the individual lives it. There is also a stress on subjective experience as the primary aspect in the study of human nature. As Maslow observes it as "direct, intimate experiential knowing". The psychoanalysis is concerned about the past while the existentialists give importance to here-and-now. "Live in the present. Don't look back except to learn. Don't look ahead except to plan". Take care of the present and the future will take care of it self is the pointing effect of existentialists.

Its basic concepts stem from the writings of the philosophers like Jaspers, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. The well known philosophers who were associated with existentialism include Martin Heidegger, Martin Buber, Jean Sartre and Albert Camus. The theologian Paul Tillich and the psychologist Rollo May of the United States have made tremendous contributions to the development of existential thought. Franz Kafka, Gabriel Marcel and Marlean Ponty have been identified with the modern existentialist movement.

**DASEIN ANALYSE :** According to Rollo



May, the existential approach is the endeavour to understand the nature of man who does the experiencing and to whom the experiences happen.<sup>6</sup> Existentialism means concentrating on the existing person. It is the emphasis on the human being as he/she is emerging and becoming. The word "existence" comes from the root *ex-sistere* meaning literally to "stand out, emerge".<sup>7</sup> Existentialism is pertaining to existence and relating to existing.

Ludwig Bigswanger, Medard Boss, Rollo May and other existentialists employ German word *Dasein* for this aspect of existence of man whose rare privilege is for self-awareness and is conscious about himself. *Dasein* may be translated into English literally as "being" (*Sein*) and "there" (*da*). *Dasein* is thought of as a process of continual development of growth toward fulfillment (fruition of one's capabilities). The literary works of existentialism insist on actions as the determining things.

For the existentialists *Dasein* indicates a dynamic state, becoming, a continual process-the activity of being something not yet realised. They are concerned with "What is of importance in man is being - in both mind and body as an inseparable amalgam of physical and spiritual". Existentialists view this approach as *Dasein* analysis. Psychoanalysis is the study of human nature connecting between mental states and physical processes. This is referred to as "holistic" view of human beings in an interpersonal setting.

**MODES BEING :** According to existentialists, man is associated and interrelated with his world. Man implies his world and the world implies him..... "there is

neither without the other and each is understandable only in terms of the other". The existentialists have refined their concepts of world by distinguishing three modes of world each person embodies as being-in-the-world.

1. **UMWELT** is literally translated as "World around". It embraces the biological drives, needs and instincts of the individual. *Umwelt* roughly corresponds to environment when we consider it alone.

2. **MITWELT** is literally the "with world", the world of being-with others, one's fellowmen. It is nothing to do with the concept of group behaviour. It is the world of others, of relationships with one's fellow beings.

**EIGENWELT** Or "own world" is the mode of relationship to one's self. "It is a grasping of what something is in the world ....." It is one's subjective experience of inner and outer reality. The three modes of world are experienced simultaneously. In brief, this is the meaning of phenomenological method which the existentialists have adopted. Laing lays emphasis on the last two modes, namely *Mitwelt* and *Eigenwelt*.

**PHENOMENOLOGY :** "Phenomenology" is derived from a Greek root *phainesthai* meaning "to appear: as it appears."<sup>9</sup> Phenomenology is rather introspection which is taken to mean a combination of experience and perception. It is the study of unanalysed experience and concerns with immediate sensory experience of the individual and the meaning derived from it. The study of personality emphasises the subjective experience and the individuals and their personal view of the world.



According to the existentialists, phenomenology is said to be unprocessed, unvanishing experiences of raw data of existence. It is almost atheoretical. In order to observe the world, one must give up the theoretical perceptions. The very experience of one's self constitutes the existing, living human being. Phenomenology is thought of as the real individual experiences without alterations by strategies, "unshaped by theoretical predictions and unhampered by technical verbalisations". One has to view it as real, valid and essential for understanding behaviour. This study is generally concerned with how the individuals perceive and interpret events. We are the product of our own thinking. It focuses on the positive nature of man. What we sow so shall we reap. No more than the quality of our thoughts.

**TENETS :** The main tenet is that "man is what he makes of himself and is not predestined by a God, or by society or by biology."<sup>10</sup>

Man has the freedom to make major choice and to assume responsibility for his own existence. He is not a ready-made machine. Existentialists do not consider individuals as just objects in nature but as, indicated earlier, they are viewed to be as having existence with the world and the world in turn has existence with the individual. Thus the world and the individual co-constitute with each other. The traditional psychology views the individuals and their entities.

The basic tenet as well as the phenomenological approach to personality is that human beings are endowed with choice, self-direction, freedom and courage.

Since there is no cause and effect relationships in human behaviour, each person is responsible for his/her existence. The individual has complete freedom of choice. As Sartre put it: "I am my choices". According to Morris (1966) (Morris, M.G. *Psychological Miscarriage: an end to mother love*. Trans-action 1966, 3(2), 8-13) human beings are said to be the choosing agents in the sense that they are unable to avoid choosing their way through life. They are also free agents in the sense that they have freedom to set the goals of their own lives. They are subject to "individual will" and any external law restricting their freedom is invalid and unjust. If anyone lets outside forces determine his/her choice, he/she is contemptible. They are responsible agents in the sense, that they are personally accountable for their free choices. As such, they are endowed with personal freedom, personal decision, and personal commitment. If a man feels responsible and free, there is no need for God in his life. Kierkegaard based his reasoning on "faith, knowledge, thought and reality". His "razor edge decision" of human free will which determines man's personal relation to God is analysed in "Enten-Eller" (Either-or 1843) (C. Reader's Encyclopedia ed. by Rose Benet.) Each person is responsible for his/her existence. What each of us makes our existence is up to us. Life is what you make it. H.P. Blavatsky observes... "man is himself his own saviour as his own destroyer".

This does not mean necessarily that having freedom to choose amounts to all the choices we make will be wise ones. If this could be, people would not be afflicted with anxiety, boredom, guilt, alienation, miser / phobias, delusions and such self-imposed



tensions and neurotic symptoms. One has to make life more meaningful by the acceptance of reality as a "Value-loaded perception". This has no meaning without being experiencing it. If this and experience coincide, they really offer us a basis of trust, stability and faith.

**AGONY-SELF FULFILMENT:** The above oxymoran epithet requires the courage to stand on one's own legs for finding satisfying values. The freedom to shape one's existence (essence) amounts to both agony and glory. It needs courage to seek and follow new paths providing immense possibilities for self-fulfilment.

Existentialists view the person as on going, changing and continually striving toward a future state of self-fulfilment. Some people lack courage and do not want their essence to be left up to them. They seek external agency such as religion or Godman to advise them on what to believe and how to act. Sartre goes to such an extent to reject the idea of God where man has to depend upon Him. This dependence deprives the individuals from new possibilities for being, the element of experience. Thus the individual ends up with an aimless, purposeless or wasted life. (James C. Coleman, *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*, Bombay : D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Pvt. Ltd., 1976, P.71.)

**VALUE, OBLIGATION AND ANXIETY :** The central theme consists of the concepts dealing with meaning, value and obligation. The will-to-meaning is taken to be basic to human nature seeking satisfying values by which one can live. This naturally differs with each individually as well as of individual opinion. Each one of us has to find his/her

own pattern of values and decide the meaning of his/her life. Existentialism places a high premium on one's obligation towards others. The central consideration is not what one can get out of life but what one can contribute to it. Our lives will be fulfilling only if we dedicate ourselves to socially constructive values and choices. Existential living is the quality of life "here and now" so that each moment of one's living is new and different from all that experienced before. Live for to-day and make the most of the present moment. If we reflect on the past and project the desire for the future, we are missing the present which is the very existence. Past is dead and future is yet to come or happen. The present is the real which does not create anything false. Remain with the moment. Hence it is better to relate ourselves with our "nowness" and "hereness". (Osho, *Vedanta : An Art of Dying* New Delhi: Diamond Pocket Books (P) Ltd, 1991, P. 105.)

Another theme is the anxiety and encounter with nothingness which looms as large as love does. It is concerned with death as it is with life. Anxiety is "the sense of dread, of being choked out of life". It is a painful feeling to the human situation. It is an ultimate death of non-being which is inevitable and inescapable destiny of all human beings. If we are to save ourselves from anxiety, we should set before ourselves a goal of meaningful life. We are the only creatures aware of the possibility of non-being. We are constantly feeling that death will occur at any place and in any moment. This will lead to existential anxiety. This helps us to ponder whether we are living a meaningful and fulfilling life or not. "Do good whilst thou livest if you wishest to live after death". As Shakespeare put it in *Julius*



Ceasar. "The evil that men do lives after them. The good is oft interred with their bones". To resist existential anxiety, one has to live a life that counts for something and altruistic relationships with others. The Red Cross motto points out: "Do something for nothing and you will get everything". "Giving should be done without the desire for return or reward". In a word, do something wild continuously in one's life time". As Helen Keller once remarked, "I feel life an exciting business - and most exciting when it is lived for others".<sup>11</sup> We should develop self-control and mind control so that we may maintain poise without being overtaken by anxiety and unwhole-some emotions.

**HUMAN POTENTIAL APPROACH:** The existentialists are hesitant of employing scientific behavioural analysis lest they should lose sight of the true nature of a person. Further, they are more curious in exploring the depths of the human mind and spirit and people's potential. This type of approach has been called the human potential approach. The holistic knowledge derived from human mind and spirit helps in the blossoming of the full human potential. This approach helps for optimal development of potential abilities, knowledge and skills.

The basic concept underlying the human potential is that the average people normally employ an insignificant part of the creativity, initiative, inner feeling and experience of which they are endowed with. It is up to them to help themselves learn to become more spontaneous and creative through new ways of feeling, communicating and being. This is the need, according to Malsow, "to be what one is capable of becoming", "what a man can be he must be".

Potential approach stresses on imparting knowledge which brings about "global thinking, emotional balance and alter correct attitude and outlook in man and transform his behaviour qualitatively as well".<sup>12</sup>

### TECHNIQUES:

Techniques for achieving these qualities are said to include the following: Existential therapy is based on existential concepts pointing out the development of a sense of direction and meaning in one's existence.

I. Exercises in relaxation and sensory awareness. II. Nude sensitivity training. III. Tai-chi (meditation in movement). IV. Dance Therapy. V. Body Massage. VI. Transcendental Meditation. VII. Seminars on Love and Sex. VIII. Zen Buddhism. IX. Yoga and related topics. X. Assertiveness Training. XI. Transactional Analysis. XII. Encounter Groups. XIII. Gestalt Therapy Workshop. XIV. Raja yoga meditation.

To sum up, many concepts of existentialists such as choice, freedom, courage, values, meaning, obligation, non-being and extentional anxiety have a clout on contemporary thought.

### REFERENCES:

1. Christopher F. Monte, *Beneath The Mask an Introduction to Theories of Personality*, US: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980, P. 419.

2. Laing R.D. *The Politics of Family*, New York: Vintage, 1969, P. 66.

3. *The Divided Self*. Baltimore: Penguin (Pelican ed). 1959, P. 45.

3A. Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1941, P.230.



# BOOK REVIEWS

## TELUGU

**VIJAYANJALI:** (Poetry) by Dr. Yelchuri Vijaya Raghava Rao : (Publishers Sagara Grandhamala, 9-19-3. CBM Compound, Visakhapatnam-3) Pages 100; Prize Rs. 40/-

This Book contains 30 verses and 3 stories on different topics. Dr. Y. Vijaya Raghava Rao, has abundant knowledge in Music, Literature and Dance, and is a PADMASRI awardee. He visited foreign countries and received several rewards.

VIJAYANJALI is dedicated, not to any person, but to the Mankind! One can understand the depth of his commitment and faith in the human nature.

In **Sravanthi**, the poet inspires the reader to strive for universal family, ignoring caste, creed etc., as interlinked with music and dance (flow of nectar) and *vedas* etc.

"Oh, man why are you silent? Can't you see through the artificial differences between man and man, religions, languages

and castes?" asks the poet and exhorts to look at the Sun and the Moon instead.

"What is the use of going to a temple / church without having Love in your heart? Dividing the Society means dividing God" and declares that ultimately "Society is God".

Paradoxically, while everyone wants Peace, everyone is found to be fighting! His language and expression stir the soul.

All the three stories deal with politics, love and films all three being current topics.

- M.S. SASTRY

**CHAITANYA KAVITHA :** (April & July, 95): Editors - Tangirala Subba Rao and R.V. Sudarsanam. Pages 85. Prize : 20/- Publishers : Chaitanya Kavita Vedika, R-2, Jnana Bharathi, Bangalore-560 056.

This is a quarterly journal as declared by the publishers. The present issue is dedicated to that noted personality - the late Smt. T. Premalatha Reddy, a great social worker, feminist and activist, and the

*(continued from previous page)*

4. The papal Encyclical of 12 August, 1950, Humani Generis.

4A. Zerald Zaltman and Melanie Wallendorf, Consumer Behavior Basic Findings and Management Implications, New York : Wiley, 1979.

5. Carl Rogers, A Study of Science, Vol. III, Formulations of the person in the Social Context, Newyork : McGraw-Hill, 1959, P. 222.

6. May, Rollo "The Emergence of Existential psychology". in R. May (Ed), Existential Psychology Newyork: Random House 1961. P. 12.

7. Ibid., P. 11.

8. Rollo May, "The Origins and Significance of the Existential Movement in Psychology", Newyork;

Basic Books, 1958 P.63.

9. Shlien, John M. "Phenomenology and personality" In Joseph W. Wemphman and Ralph W. Heine (Eds.) Concepts of personality. Chicago Aldine, 1963, P. 298.

10. The Reader's Companion to World Literature, Newyork: A Mentor Book, 1973, P.183.

11. Alan Loy Mc Ginnis, "Getting the Most out of Life", Bombay: Reader's Digest, December 1992, P. 132.

12. Dr. Chilana Mulk Raj, Divine Values For "The golden Age", New Delhi : Purity, October 1992, Vol. XII No.1, P.8.





worthy wife of a worthy husband, renowned poet, PATTABHI.

The production values of the magazine are very good and the get up is good and attractive.

There are 32 articles and the main theme is the understanding of woman, her place in the society and the need for striving for human welfare. As the revolutionary writer Chalam said, "The woman is today cleaning the vessels but is capable of ruling the country". One has to be aware of the potentialities of the woman. Jayaprabha is vehement in her criticism of the writers describing the body of the woman. Each and every movement of the woman is looked at by man from the sexual angle (*Streeparvam* - Swarupa Rani)

Prof. Nayani Krishna Kumari deeply and seriously questions, "Who am I?" and answers - "woman is being with self respect and individuality." With an insight and a philosophical touch, *Antaranga Rodasi* depicts the battle of life and the eternal flow of time.

"Surname, name plate or the name of the ration card holder are not ours - But we are worshipped as *Gruhalakshmi*" (Mandarapu Hymavathi)

"Unless the domination of the man ends, the woman continues to be a slave obtained without any expenditure, free." (M. Srilatha).

Also included in this is a piece, "VANCHITA" by the late G. Joshua. Translations of Kannada and Pakistani writers also find a place in this special issue.

**C.P. BROWN CHARITRA** : by Janamaddi Hanumat Sastry, 1/1845, Gandhinagar, Cuddapah-516 004, published by Telugu Akademi, Hyderabad. Pages 85, Rs. 8/-.

Great names like Sir Arthur Cotton, Col. Collins Mackenzie, Sir Thomas Munroe, Charles Philip Brown roll by for their great contribution to the Telugu country and the Telugus. The contribution of C.P. Brown to the the Telugu language and literature is invaluable. Such was his love for and interest in Telugu literature that he maintained a regular army of Telugu scholars of eminence and got many classics edited and copied from the palm leaves, which otherwise would have been lost to us. This he did at great personal cost and devotion. His Telugu lexicon is still used and is considered an authoritative work. His knowledge of the Telugus and appreciation of the culture is evident when he said "The Telugus are a people quite as highly civilized as any in Europe; occassionally their modes of speech resemble those of Italy".

Mr. Hanumat Sastry had done a creditable work in his short but lively account the life and times of C.P. Brown and his great contribution to the Telugu language and literature. The book also contains some of the rare poems collected by him, which are as interesting. Mr. Sastry has been doing excellent work as the secretary of the Brown Memorial Committee to perpetuate the memory of C.P. Brown. A laudable venture.

- M.S. SASTRY

- Vemaraju Narasimha Rao



# OUR CONTRIBUTORS

**Harindranath Chattopadhyaya** : Word-renowned man-of-letters, prolific writer of poetry, plays, prose and biography and autobiography. Freedom-fighter who led Satyagraha movement, Actor.

**Y.Satya Sree**: Lecturer in English in St. PIOUS COLLEGE for Women, Hyderabad; Sub-Editor, TRIVENI.

**Govindaraju Sita Devi** : A prolific Telugu writer of 28 Novels and 7 short story compilations some of which were translated in to Kannada. Recipient of several prizes and awards.

**Vemaraju Narasimha Rao** : A prolific writer in both Telugu and English, with 5 published works and about 200 articles on literary criticism, stories, playlets etc., in English & Telugu. President, Navya Sahiti Samiti and Navya Nataka Samiti.

**M.B. Thakur** : Poet, 14-A Pratap Kunf Society, Sarkhas Rd., Vasana, Ahmadabad (Gujarat).

**G. Somaseshu** : Lecturer in English Govt. College, Armoor (Nizamabad Dt.).

**Dr. C. Jacob** : Retd. District and Sessions Judge; President English Society; Poet Narasapur.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan** : Head of the Department of Education and Dean, Rashtreeya Sanskrit Vidya Peeth, Deemed University, Tirupati.

**Dr. K. Damodar Rao & K. Indrasena Reddy**: Faculty Member of the English Deptt., Kakatiya University, Warangal.

**R.Suryanarayana Murthy**: Poet-Retired Principal in Andhra Pradesh Educational Service. Selected as the Poet of the Year 1995 by the Poetry Society of America.

**Subra Bharati Manian** : Famous writer in Tamil.

**M.S. Ramaswamy**: Presidency Magistrate, Controller's Quarters, Bharatiar University,

Coimbatore.

**B. Indira Kumari** : Poet and writer, Anantapur.

**Dr. M. Varadarajan**: Lecturer, Department of Tamil, S.V. University, Tirupati. Principal Investigator, U.G.C's major project - Upanishidic Thoughts etc.

**Dr. R. Janardhana Rao** : Retd., Principal; Poet and Author of scholarly articles, Machilipatnam.

**Dr. B. Parvathi** : Reader in English, Andhra University, Waltair.

**A.R. Narayanan** : A writer of Poetry, Madras.

**Prof. S. Jagadisan**: Professor of English (Retd.), Madras University; Visiting Professor for Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasantinagar and Presidency College, Madras. Edited Anthologies of Prose and Poetry.

**Dr. T. Vasudeva Reddy**: Reader in English, Govt. College, Puttur. An eminent Poet, Prose writer and literary critic. Won the prestigious Michael Madusudan Award; Aclaimed by International Bio-graphy Society, Carolina (US.).

**M.A. Waheed** : Lecturer in English, Govt. College, Armoor (Nizamabad Dt.).

**Janamaddi Hanumat Sastry** : An extensive writer of repute on a wide variety of subjects. Retired as a Lecturer and is presently Secretary of the C.P. Brown Memorial Trust. Was actively associated with the Cuddapah District Writers Association.

**Mamidipudi Pattabhiram** : Deputy Editor, "The HINDU", the well known English Daily, Madras (Published from the various cities in India; an eminent scholar).

**Dr. Sripathi Ranganadha** : Professor and Director, Centre of Post-Graduate Studies, Y.N. College, Narsapur.









O.K.  
3/3/97



Compled  
1999-2000



